GOP Recount Mischief, Take Two MICHAEL CROWLEY

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Music's Mystery Man
JEREMY EICHLER

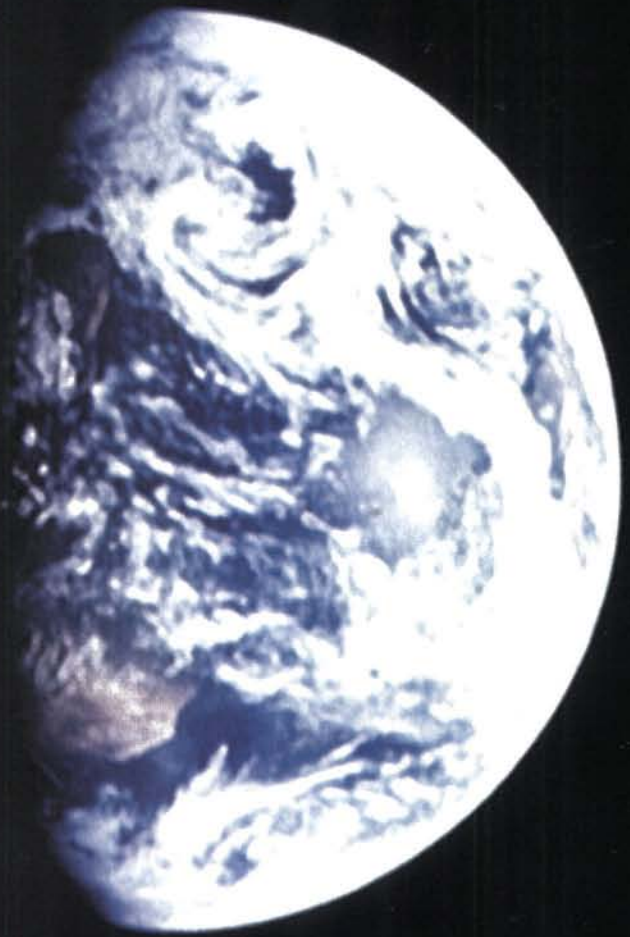
Bush's Laughable Budget
THE EDITORS

MARCH 12, 2001

Missile defense isn't really meant to protect America. It's a tool for global dominance.

And that's exactly why we need it.

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN



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A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
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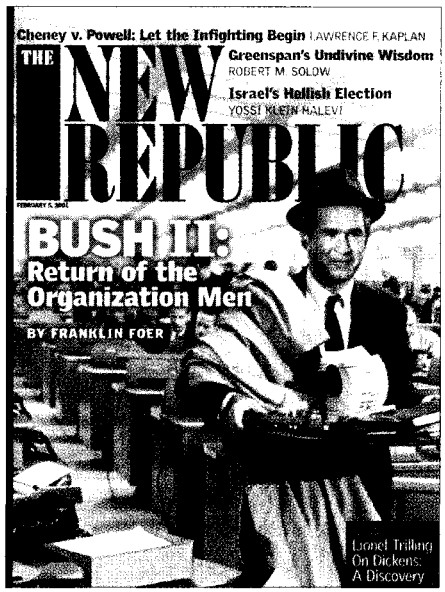
Only a test

TO THE EDITORS:

The trouble with President Bush's plan to help poor, minority students in inner cities is that it relies on standardized tests to determine if they are being taught well ("The Real Test," February 5). Standardized tests will do nothing of the sort, because they are the wrong instruments with which to measure instructional effectiveness. A standardized test compares the performance of a student with the performance of a previous group of test-takers called the test's norm group. To make norm-referenced interpretations possible, test-makers need to engineer score spreads among students. They do so by including on the test items that are unlikely to be taught in school. That's why those students whom Bush is focusing on helping the most will be the ones who benefit the least. Students who come from homes in which no one speaks standard English or whose parents lack the means to pay for books or travel are at a distinct disadvantage relative to middle-class students. In short, standardized tests fail the test.

WALT GARDNER
Los Angeles, California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THE NEW REPUBLIC
BUSH II:
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TO THE EDITORS:

"The Real Test" misinterprets the results of certain localities' experiments with school vouchers. The editors write: "Once they began losing students (and funding) to neighboring private schools through voucher programs, the chastened schools took steps to improve." It's a lovely image: complacent educators awakened to action by a little healthy competition. The trouble is that this sort of competition rewards only measurable results (usually in test scores or graduation rates). Facing the immediate need for such results, educators are under tremendous pressure to take short cuts—such as easing standards for graduation or teaching to the test. Unfortunately, the "results" that this kind of competition produces have little or nothing to do with actual learning. THE NEW REPUBLIC has already reported on the hollowness of George W. Bush's education record in Texas, where inflated scores on state tests weren't matched by any increase in scores on national tests. Why is TNR so willing to believe that a national initiative would be any different?

CHRISTOPHER C. WEAVER
Assistant Professor of English
William Paterson University
Wayne, New Jersey

TO THE EDITORS:

I've watched with interest the sudden turnabout among liberal intellectuals regarding the virtues of school vouchers. I won't bother to resurrect old arguments here but will instead bring up an idea no one wants to talk about: teacher pay. I have worked in public schools and juvenile detention centers as a teacher and a social worker for the past decade. I don't make a lot of money from my work, and it really doesn't pay the bills; but at least I get health benefits and regular raises due to my union-negotiated contract. I started my career in a Catholic school in the late '80s. For my efforts in that run-down urban school I earned $10,000 per year. Salaries are not a whole lot better today.

These voucher schools cannot pay decent wages. A recent study by the Educational Testing Service concluded that public schools are not paying enough, given teachers' performance on certain tests (which they found was on par with that of doctors, lawyers, and others with graduate degrees). Teacher shortages may become widespread as veterans leave for better jobs and new recruits cannot be found. Isn't it obvious that these voucher schools will only further demean the teaching profession by employing unqualified faculty? For that matter, aren't teachers entitled to decent salaries and benefits? I fear educators have no friends on the right or the left. We take the blame for a system we did not create and are told to compete with scab labor at private schools. But then the folks making all these suggestions probably never had to

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DANIEL MAZZA
Colonia, New Jersey

Draft dodge

TO THE EDITORS:

Yossi Klein Halevi must be aware that Israeli high school graduates may be excused from army service if they choose to enter a yeshiva to study Torah ("Jewish Unappeal," February 5). It was therefore incorrect (and insulting) for him to refer to yeshiva students as draft evaders. Moreover, recent studies have convincingly refuted the charge, implicit in Halevi's analysis, that Israeli yeshivas are filled with students who wouldn't be there but for the draft. A study conducted by Boston University economist Eli Berman found that "Yeshiva attendance typically continues long after the [draft] deferment subsidy has run out," noting that if "Yeshiva attendance is being extended in order to qualify for a draft exemption we would expect that as soon as the exemption is granted, [a student] would leave Yeshiva.... Yet ... not only does Yeshiva attendance not disappear ... there is no sharp decline of Yeshiva attendance rates." Berman attempts to provide an economic rationale for this behavior but "doesn't preclude the importance of spiritual values or an ethic of cultural preservation." All those who truly care about the future of Israel should not be so quick to denigrate the keepers of its spiritual heritage.

AVI SCHICK
Brooklyn, New York

Contained

TO THE EDITORS:

Lawrence F. Kaplan's very interesting article "Containment" (February 5) is the kind that convinced me to subscribe to TNR. Just one point: Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, for all his hawkishness, is lukewarm about U.S. military involvement in Colombia. He may be a hawk, but he is a discriminating one.

MARK PERRY
Bloomington, Indiana

Unreasonable

TO THE EDITORS:

I enjoyed Charles Larmore's lucid exposition of John Rawls's moral philosophy ("Lifting the Veil," February 5). But I'm puzzled that he regards reasonableness as a norm that cannot be subsumed into Rawls's structure of moral principles. Social contract theory accounts for this principle as the product of mutual self-interest from which the communal norms of civil society originate. Thus reasonableness (and with it morality) is born of rationality in the sense of prudential self-interest. As a student, many years ago, I asked Rawls about this. As I recall, he noted that the Hobbesian/Lockean contract was metaphorically analogous to the neo-Kantian veil of ignorance. In this tradition each self-interested individual comes to realize that his or her own interest is best served by considering the interests of others and accepting the restraints on his or her own behavior so long as everyone else's behavior is similarly constrained. Thus the pursuit of rational self-interest leads individuals to choose to act reasonably in order to share in the mutual benefits that are possible only in a social order that recognizes the practical necessity of moral principles.

S. ROBERT LICHTER
President
Center for Media and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

CHARLES LARMORE REPLIES:

In both *Political Liberalism* (1993) and *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, John Rawls refuses to assume that "rational" agents, seeking to satisfy their own interests most efficiently, are therefore obliged to be "reasonable" as well, cooperating with others in ways that all, as free and equal persons, can endorse. S. Robert Lichter appears persuaded that such an assumption is correct. Rawls is doubtful, and rightly so. Two difficulties stand in the way of deriving morality from individual prudence. A person interested solely in advancing his own good will defect from a cooperative scheme when it suits his interest. And an institution based upon bargaining among self-interested individuals is likely to be unfair, reflecting the differences of power among them. Rawls holds—again, I think, rightly—that there is no way to reason ourselves into the moral point of view from some position outside of it. ■

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Psycho

THERE IS STILL something missing in the narrative of Bill Clinton. The story line shifts so quickly that this is easy to forget. But Pardonscam helps us get a grip on it. After all is said and done, I can find no adequate, rational explanation for why the president did what he did. It makes no sense. It adds up to much less than the sum of its parts. And what's missing is the key to who he is.

Think about it. What was the rational motive for the pardons? Money? But Clinton has plenty of opportunities to make money in the next few years—gobs of it. The scandal, in fact, reduces his long-term financial gains, because it tarnishes his reputation in the eyes of nervous corporations who pay the speech fees. Unless we find out he has some Swiss bank account with a few hundred million in it, the pardons weren't worth the blowback—as any intelligent politician would have known. Sex? Always a possibility, but unproved. Prestige? Au contraire. Repentance? Always a chance. I actually buy the notion that some small part of Clinton's psyche wanted to bail out a few minor drug dealers to atone for his draconian war on drugs. But repentance for the injustice done to Marc Rich or Carlos Vignali? Please.

The rational answer is that there is no rational answer. In Bill Clinton we had for eight years a truly irrational person in the White House, someone who, I think, lived on the edge of serious mental illness. He was and is a psychologically sick man. This is not to absolve him of responsibility for ceaseless lying, perjury, administrative chaos, human bullying, cruelty, lawlessness, self-destruction, and on and on. But it is to say that many of Clinton's actions as president can be fully understood only if one understands him to be a deeply disturbed person—not fully in control of himself or his actions.

The pardons are a classic example. Issuing pardons is a reasonably simple executive function. But Clinton made them—as he makes anything he touches—more complex. Clinton abhors simplicity almost as much as he abhors silence. Both terrify him because they require him to think and act rationally. This, he fears, he cannot do. So he starts the noise machine and the activity machine until rationality is drummed out of the room by sheer work and words. So the simple question of reviewing Justice Department recommendations turns into a months-long, rolling teach-in involving hundreds of people, envelopes, letters, personal requests, familial favors, and a homing signal to every sleazebag in the country that justice is for sale. This being Clinton, he also couldn't make up his mind. So his last few days in the White House appear to have been positively surreal—a president who barely slept, a process so chaotic only one man could keep a handle on it, combined with manic activity on innumerable fronts: the Middle East, a negotiation with the independent counsel, countless press interviews, a radio address on the morning of his departure, and on and on. The chaos was almost a mirror image of his first days in office, when he tried to do everything and hire everyone and ended up with chaos.

What can we call this kind of behavior? Clinton is not stupid. He is not functionally incompetent. He has had eight years to get his act together. The behavior illustrated by his pardons is, I think, simply pathological. Psychologists can quibble over what exactly was awry with our ex-president's mind and soul. But no one can explain the sheer irrationality, the reckless, oblivious, careening narcissism of the last eight years without concluding that, at some level, Clinton was not psychologically healthy enough to have been president of the United States.

I'm serious. I don't regard psychological illness as a taint or a foible. It's real, and it shouldn't be stigmatized. We should be just as aware of our president's mental health as of his physical health, inasmuch as they both directly affect his ability to do his job. Among recent presidents, both Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy walked up to the edge of true pathology. But neither was as masterful as Clinton in disguising and manipulating it. What kind of pathology did Clinton have? Edith Efron pointed out eight years ago that the American Psychiatric Association cites the following as signs of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder: perfectionism, workaholism, rage, chronic indecisiveness, and lack of intellectual focus. Anyone come to mind? The APA list of symptoms for an anti-social personality disorder (popularly known as a sociopath) includes:

> (1) failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest; (2) deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for personal profit or pleasure; (3) impulsivity or failure to plan ahead; (4) irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults; (5) reckless disregard for safety of self or others; (6) consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations; (7) lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another.

I'm not a psychiatrist, but if I had a friend who was constantly getting in trouble with the law, who was taking reckless financial and sexual risks, who was an insomniac, who could never show up for anything less than an hour late, who had bouts of overeating, who was unable to confess to a genuine mistake, and who thought he could lie his way out of anything, I would suggest he see a shrink.

Instead, he's had us. We asked for it. We elected him. And truly gifted sociopaths have ways of inveigling those around them to participate actively in the sickness, to maintain denial, to keep up appearances. In the tragic figures of Hillary Rodham Clinton and the American electorate, we have two such enablers. Clinton seduced many of us with prosperity and the rest because the emptiness of his own soul was so ravenous for love that it seemed churlish to deny him his need. But then we were complicit—forced either to defend him until we looked ridiculous or to vent our rage at a man we grew to hate because he was too dangerous to love and nothing in between was emotionally possible. In this respect, the countless mea culpas by Clintonistas in the last few weeks have been nothing if not poignant. Out of his range, beyond his seductive powers, they suddenly see reality. And those of us who have long loathed him, who were truly angered and frustrated by him, can now perhaps also see that his vices were enmeshed in his sickness and that pity as well as anger is an appropriate response.

But we should keep Chaucer's caveat in mind. As he put it in "The Pardoner's Tale":

> The more exalted such a man may be
> So much the more contemptible is he.
> A gambling prince would be incompetent
> To frame a policy of government,
> And he will sink in general opinion
> As one unfit to exercise dominion.

Let the sinking continue.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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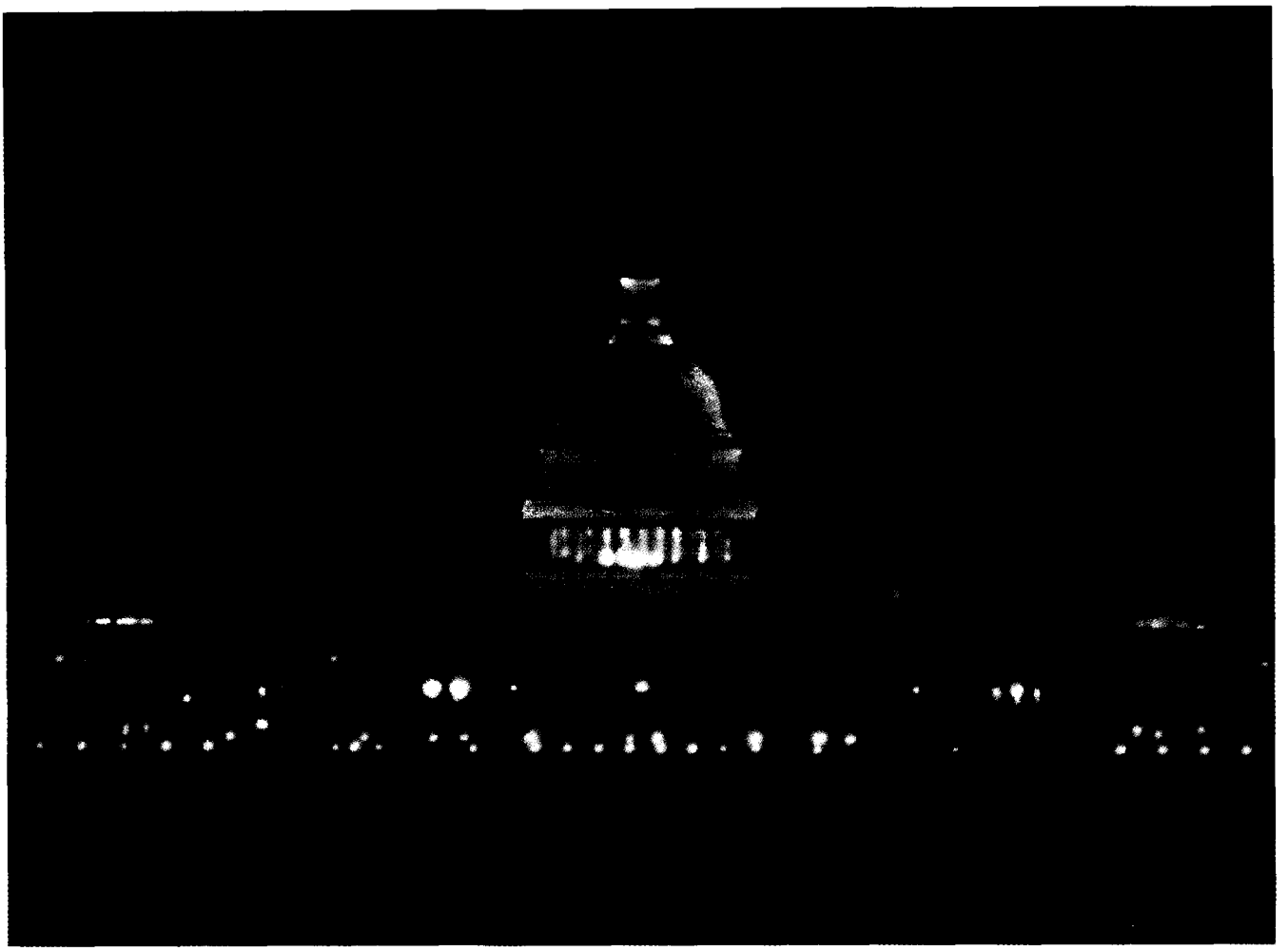

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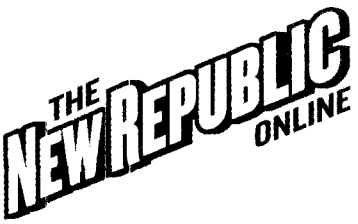

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Speech Impaired

IN HIS ADDRESS to Congress this week, President Bush listed his fiscal goals in the same order that, according to polls, the public consistently prioritizes them: spending first; then debt reduction; and, last, his tax cut, as a sort of postscript. His spinners have made this hierarchy explicit. Bush's budget "protects all our priorities, including defense, of course, and then it pays down debt," said spokeswoman Mary Matalin, "and then and only then does it get to tax relief."

Unfortunately, these words are not true in any literal or even figurative sense. From the early days of Bush's presidential campaign, the centerpiece of his economic plan has been a large tax cut, designed by acolytes of Ronald Reagan and aimed at the traditional Reaganite ends of cutting marginal rates for the wealthy and thus shrinking government by depriving it of funds. Maybe Matalin has forgotten, but Bush proposed his cut in 1999, long before he suggested any other uses for the budget surplus—before, in fact, he had any idea how large today's surplus projections would be.

And the hierarchy is not just chronological. Already Bush has endorsed three expansions of the tax cut—making it retroactive and adding research and energy incentives—the costs of which he does not account for in his budget. But even with this unrealistically low accounting of his tax cut's size, Bush's budget makes no room for the debt reduction and spending he flaunts. Somehow, these "highest" priorities always get squeezed out by his lowest.

Bush's latest excuse for not reducing the debt as much as many in Congress want is a tendentious eleventh-hour claim that, despite his good intentions, more than $1.2 trillion of debt *can't* be paid back (see "Savings Grace," by Ryan Lizza, page 12). The transparent reality is that he's trying to create more room in the budget for his tax cut.

His new spending initiatives, meanwhile, are wildly out of proportion to the grandiose rhetoric that has accompanied them. Bush's tax credits for the uninsured are woefully inadequate, costing one-third as much as some Bush advisers reportedly wanted. His prescription-drug benefit is so underfunded that it has been virtually laughed out of Congress. Even on education, supposedly his top priority, Bush's spending increases are meager. In his speech, Bush touted his plan to spend more on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. He neglected to mention that he plans an overall cut in the environmental-protection budget.

Bush conceals his budget's stinginess by claiming it would increase federal discretionary spending by 4 percent per year. Six years ago, Newt Gingrich browbeat much of the news media into eschewing the word "cut," and Bush seems to be following the same strategy with evident success. A *Washington Post* news story recently referred to his efforts to achieve "a significant reduction in the growth rate for other spending." But this is utter nonsense. Over time, inflation and a growing population naturally expand the costs of federal programs. A constant level of services from, say, the Internal Revenue Service requires constant growth in that agency's nominal budget to account for the higher cost of staff and equipment and the growing number of taxpayers. Merely keeping spending "above inflation," as Bush boasts, doesn't mean services aren't being cut. In fact, Bush himself has acknowledged as much in the past. When conservatives criticized him two years ago for boosting the Texas budget, *The Dallas Morning News* reported that Bush responded, "[A]n 'honest comparison' of spending growth should take inflation and the state's increasing population into account." Apparently not anymore.

Bush's spending "growth" is also an aggregate figure. Since he plans increases in certain programs—defense, education—he must make offsetting cuts elsewhere. Under Bush's budget, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Interior, the Justice Department, and several others would all have their budgets cut in nominal, not just real, terms—that is, the reductions would qualify as cuts even under Bush's own definition.

Should some programs be slashed? Without a doubt. But the truth is that discretionary spending as a percentage of the economy is at its lowest level in 35 years. If Bush wants it to plunge even further, he ought to say so directly. He won't, of course, for the same reason he won't openly argue for a return to supply-side economics: The public doesn't want it. It wants what the president advocated in his address: a government that grows within reasonable limits and funds important social programs, as large a reduction in the national debt as possible, and a tax cut geared mainly toward low- and middle-income taxpayers. If only Bush had put that in his budget. ■

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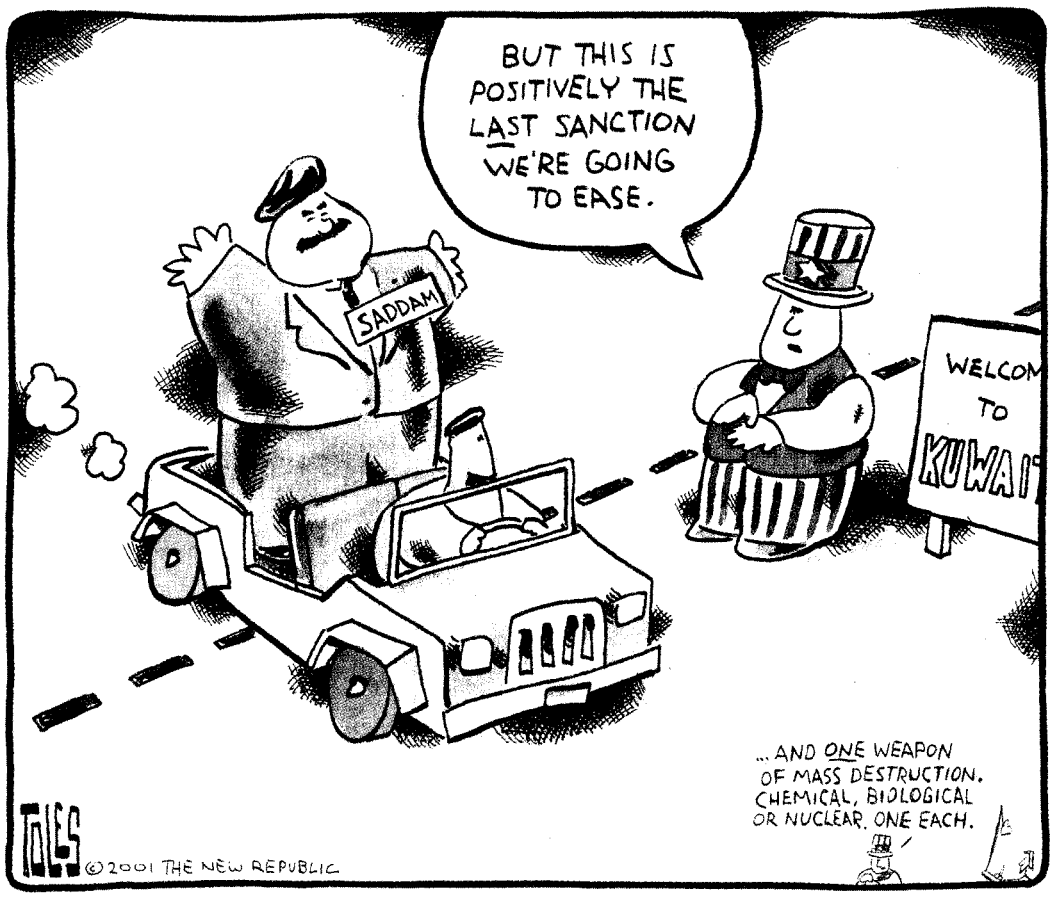
NOTEBOOK

SUB STANDARD: In the wake of the USS *Greenville*'s sinking of the Japanese trawler *Ehime Maru*, the press has demanded to know why civilians are allowed to prowl about (and, on occasion, operate the controls of) submarines at sea. Perhaps it should ask itself the same question—many of those civilian visitors were journalists. Why didn't any of them suggest at the time that cramming $1 to $2 billion, many-thousand-ton warships with untrained civilians might not be a great idea? Perhaps because they were too busy being wowed. John Podhoretz, then of *The Weekly Standard*, took advantage of a 1998 ceremonial cruise with three dozen other civilians by "romping about this ship," "shooting the breeze with five of the chief petty officers," "listen[ing] to tapes of whale song," "fir[ing] off 'water slugs' from the torpedo compartment, and look[ing] through the periscope." The toughest questions he asked for his subsequent article: "[W]hat do you do if two of your men get into a fight?" and "How do you keep up morale?" *Wall Street Journal* assistant editor Melanie Kirkpatrick, invited aboard the USS *Miami* last spring (it's not clear from her subsequent article whether the sub was moving), could also barely contain her gushing. Not only are subs of "continuing importance to our national defense," she wrote, but they are a great example of how the military "take[s] young men and women and teach them important skills and work habits that many schools and businesses can't manage to impart." Then there's *U.S. News & World Report* senior editor and sub visitor Richard Newman, who raved in a 1998 cover story about "the unique capabilities that only submarines can provide" and dismissed charges (leveled by, among others, Senator John McCain) that the Soviet Union's demise had rendered subs obsolete. "Russian nuclear subs," Newman noted, "have expanded the range of their patrols over recent years, skimming U.S. waters at least four times since 1994," and other "potential enemies such as Iran and China" were building up their submarine fleets as well. Not to mention those menacing Japanese fishing boats.

HE AIN'T HEAVY . . . : Looks like Jeb Bush is taking another one for the team. Thanks in part to an unexpected increase in Medicaid spending, Florida enters this year's legislative session some $70 million in the red. To balance the budget, Jeb is already calling for spending cuts in health care and education—cuts sure to alienate many Florida voters, particularly the young moderates whose Republican loyalty has been growing increasingly thin. But now Jeb's big brother, President Bush, threatens to make a difficult situation even worse with his hoped-for repeal of the federal estate tax. Why? Because Florida, like many states, has no estate tax of its own. Instead, it relies upon the federal government to pass along a percentage of the estate tax it collects. If W. abolishes the federal tax, Florida will lose that money, which would likely cost the state up to $1 billion per year, according to a recent report in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. This brotherly favor comes, of course, on the heels of a presidential recount drama that energized Florida's typically lethargic Democratic base against Jeb. More recently still, Jeb had to beg his big brother not to forge ahead with plans to approve more offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico—a move that would have antagonized even more voters in Jeb's environmentally conscious state. (W. relented.) Jeb's spokesman says he plans no such fuss this time. Maybe he should. That is, unless he plans to look for a new job in 2002.

TEMPTATION AISLE: For his address to Congress this week, Bush assembled another of his cherished multi-


BUT THIS IS POSITIVELY THE LAST SANCTION WE'RE GOING TO EASE.
SADDAM
WELCOM TO KUWAI
... AND ONE WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION. CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL OR NUCLEAR. ONE EACH.
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racial photo-ops. He placed Philadelphia Mayor John Street in the gallery next to Laura Bush and brought along the Ramos family to personalize the case for his tax cut. But not even Karl Rove could have dreamed up the scenes that unfolded on live network television as Bush made his way to and from the podium. Prominent members of the Congressional Black Caucus—who had spent months screaming about injustice in the Florida vote—lined the aisles to glad-hand with the president. There was Sheila Jackson Lee kissing the man whose election she claimed "disenfranchised" millions and whose appointment of John Ashcroft she predicted "will set us back years." And there was Jesse Jackson Jr.—who just two months earlier had called Bush's victory a "coup" and joined a CBC walkout of the congressional session that certified Bush's election—placing himself in the president's path and happily pumping his hand. Back when Clinton addressed Congress in 1998, just days after the Lewinsky scandal broke, CBC members were in exactly the same places, also clutching the president. At the time it was widely seen as indicative of their heartfelt support of Clinton through thick and thin; *The Weekly Standard* even dubbed them "Clinton's last friends." But apparently they're friends with whoever walks down the aisle—just so long as the cameras are rolling.

SHOCKING HEADLINE OF THE WEEK: "PAPER: THURMOND WANTS WIFE TO SERVE."—AP Online, February 22

MEN WITHOUT A PLAN: Democrats have long attacked George W. Bush for having an agenda that lacks specifics. But lately it's the Dems who have the details deficit. With Bush's tax plan headed to the House as early as next week, congressional Democrats have yet to agree on an alternative tax proposal to compete with it. In response to Bush's budget address this week, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt assured America that "Democrats have a better plan." Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle explained that Democrats "want a significant tax cut this year. But we want a different kind." But what kind? The "plan" to which Gephardt refers is merely a broad guiding principle of splitting the surplus equally between tax cuts, new spending, and debt reduction. But Democrats are still arguing internally about the critical question of how to distribute the benefits of a tax cut. And, without a specific option to promote, they risk looking as if they don't want any cut at all. Turns out Clinton isn't the only Democrat with a debilitating tendency to procrastinate.

NEXT UP, THE WASHINGTON TIMES' MOONIE CONNECTION: "Although its right-wing talk show hosts like Bill O'Reilly have received copious press attention, the conservative slant of Fox's regular news coverage has not."—cover story in *The Nation*, March 12, 2001

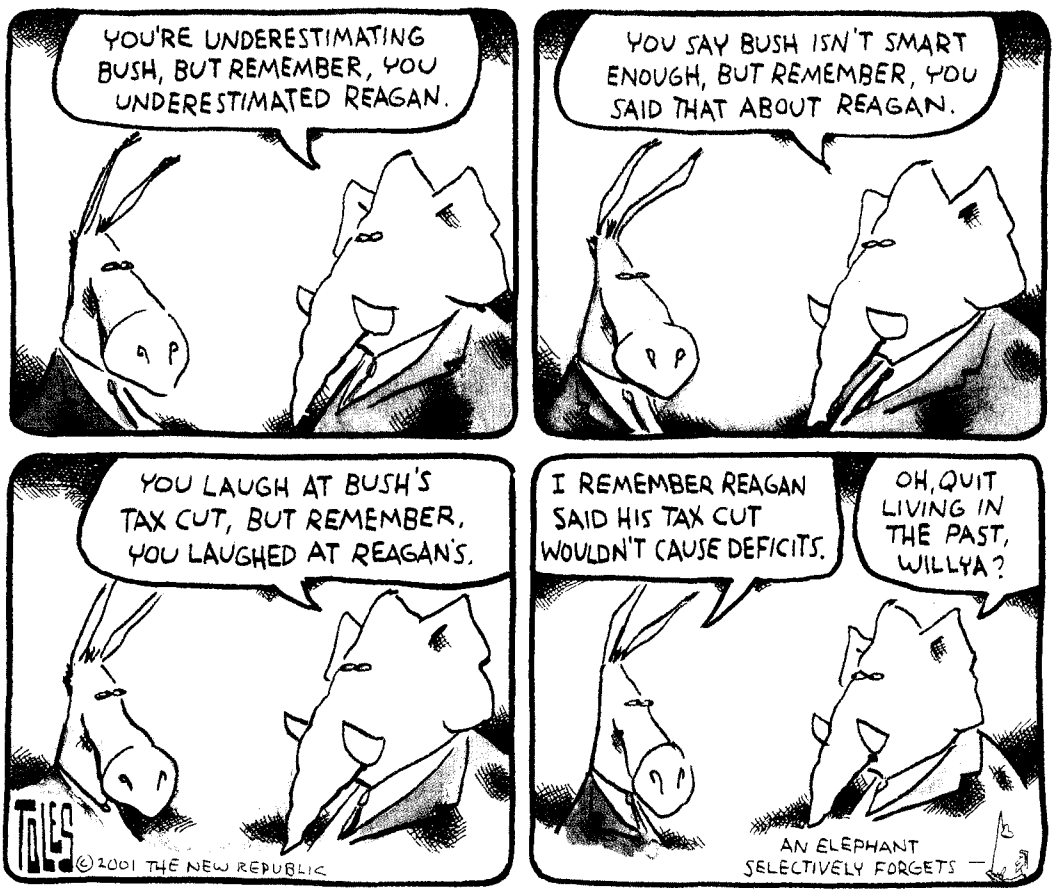
" ... Rupert Murdoch's conservative enterprises, like Fox News Channel...."—*The Nation*, October 2, 2000

" ... a line that Rush Limbaugh and the Fox News Channel would gladly parrot."—*The Nation*, February 7, 2000

" ... Matt Drudge, Fox News, and other practitioners of right-wing sleaze."—*The Nation*, March 22, 1999

"Murdoch's Fox News ... is pushing a journalist agenda that marries sleaze, suck-ups and a fealty to the nuttiest elements of right-wing ideology."—*The Nation*, March 23, 1998

" ... to force Time Warner to carry his conservative Fox News network...."—*The Nation*, June 23, 1997 ■


YOU'RE UNDERESTIMATING BUSH, BUT REMEMBER, YOU UNDERESTIMATED REAGAN.
YOU SAY BUSH ISN'T SMART ENOUGH, BUT REMEMBER, YOU SAID THAT ABOUT REAGAN.
YOU LAUGH AT BUSH'S TAX CUT, BUT REMEMBER, YOU LAUGHED AT REAGAN'S.
I REMEMBER REAGAN SAID HIS TAX CUT WOULDN'T CAUSE DEFICITS.
OH, QUIT LIVING IN THE PAST, WILLYA?
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White House Watch

Savings Grace

By Ryan Lizza

For as long as anyone can remember, at three o'clock in the afternoon, on the fourth workday of every month the Treasury Department has released an obscure document called the "Monthly Statement of the Public Debt." The MSPD, as it is known to loyal readers, is just what it sounds like: a detailed accounting of the federal debt held by the public. And it has become a sort of bible for members of Congress obsessed with paying down the national debt.

On February 6, the Bush administration released its first MSPD, but something had changed: the name. It was now called the MSTS: the "Monthly Statement of Treasury Securities." Debt hawks, convinced President Bush was trying to make public debt seem like a good thing, went berserk. Democratic Representative Gene Taylor of Mississippi, who has long included a link to the report on his website, dashed off an angry letter to the president saying he was "appalled" by the change and accusing Treasury of "mislead[ing] the American people" to build support for Bush's tax cut. "If we asked a man on the street if he would like a debt, he would quickly respond 'no,'" wrote Taylor. "If we asked the same man if he would like to have securities of the U.S. Treasury, more than likely he would respond 'yes.'" Bush's "tax cut strategy," Taylor fumed, reminded him of George Orwell's *1984*.

Things aren't quite as sinister as Taylor suggests. The name change, in fact, had been planned by the Clinton administration. But it suits the new White House just fine: As part of their effort to sell the tax cut, the Bushies are trying subtly to change the way Americans think about government debt. For starters, the new administration says the debt can't be fully paid off. One of the premises of Bush's budget is that of the $3.2 trillion debt that the public will hold at the end of 2001, only $2 trillion can be repaid in the next ten years. The administration calls this, rather authoritatively, "maximum possible debt retirement." By 2007, the argument goes, the amount of debt available for retirement will be far smaller than the available surpluses. To buy back the remainder, the government would have to pay prohibitive "penalty premiums" to bondholders. Bush's advisers estimate that could cost between $50 billion and $150 billion. It's a handy interpretation: If we can just buy back $2 trillion in debt, that leaves quite a bit left over from the $2.5 trillion Social Security surplus slated exclusively for debt reduction. Half a trillion dollars, in fact, which will presumably be used to fund Bush's transition to a partially privatized Social Security system. Decreasing the size of retirable debt means Bush won't need the Medicare surplus for debt reduction, either.

Bush's move ends the Clinton-inspired bipartisan consensus that Social Security and Medicare surpluses should be dedicated solely to debt reduction. And, watching Bush threaten this sacred cow, Democrats are salivating. "The fact that they are going to be dipping into Social Security and Medicare funds is just too good to be true," says one top Democratic staffer.

But, as usual, Bush is not as stupid as Democrats want to believe. For one thing, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is on board. On January 25, in his famed endorsement of Bush's tax cut, Greenspan said you can't pay off about $750 billion of the public debt. A few days later, the Congressional Budget Office released its latest ten-year forecast. Again, what dominated headlines was the CBO's increased surplus projection, which boosted prospects for the Bush tax cut. But, in his testimony, CBO Deputy Director Barry Anderson noted that "perhaps the most significant aspect of our projected surpluses" was that, starting in 2006, they would become larger than the amount of redeemable debt. After ten years, the CBO estimated, the government would still hold $818 billion in unredeemable debt, a number close to Greenspan's (though still far below the White House's $1.2 trillion figure). It sounds almost too good to be true: Bush gets his tax cut and, as his budget blueprint notes (echoing Greenspan's language), places the government on a "glide path to zero debt."

Of course, there are good reasons to believe that Greenspan, the CBO, and Bush may all be spectacularly wrong. At least that's the view of Gary Gensler, who was responsible for the country's debt management in the Clinton administration. The day after Bush's speech to Congress, Gensler gave House Democrats an analysis of the Treasury debt held by the public. His conclusion: The debt is not nearly as difficult to pay off as the White House suggests. (Be warned: His work is excruciatingly boring. But blame Bush for elevating the heretofore obscure technicalities of managing Treasury securities to the cornerstone of his new budget.)

The first thing to understand is that there are two types of debt held by the public: "marketable" and "non-marketable." Marketable debt, which is traded freely in the marketplace, constitutes about 87 percent of the public debt, or $3 trillion of the current $3.4 trillion debt. According to Gensler, $2.5 trillion of this will mature by 2010 and can thus be easily paid off. Of the remaining $500 billion of marketable debt that is set to mature after 2010, Gensler says as much as $340 billion can be retired through various Treasury management programs. And what about the dreaded penalty premiums the White House warns of? "There are no penalty premiums," insists Gensler. "At this point in time there is no reason to believe over a ten-year period that this marketable debt won't trade at values the government finds attractive."

More difficult to retire is the so-called non-marketable debt, which currently constitutes only $426 billion of the total debt, or just 13 percent. Of this, about half could be repaid over the next ten years if Treasury took certain steps. The real sticking point would come in trying to retire savings bonds and bonds issued to foreign governments. Not

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The Environment Wins with Norton

erry L. Anderson is the artin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the over Institution and the xecutive director of the Political Economy Research Center.

Before Gale Norton's confirmation hearing began, the "saynotonorton" web site was buzzing, the *Washington Post* carried a full-page ad sponsored by environmental groups blasting Norton, and Greenpeace protesters hung a banner at the Department of Interior reading "Our Land, Not Oil Land." It looked as though Norton might be in trouble. Despite this blitz, the environmentalists didn't get their blood and Norton sailed through the Senate on a 75-24 affirmative vote.

Why did the environmentalists lose? First, Ms. Norton proved not to be "Watt in a skirt" (referring to President Reagan's secretary of Interior) but rather a charming, reasonable person capable of collaborating with all stakeholders in Interior affairs.

Perhaps more important, she explained how she could be a "compassionate conservative" and a "passionate conservationist." Her practical environmentalism exposed the radical rhetoric of the environmental groups. They say no to exploring for oil in the nineteen-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, while Norton points out that exploration would only involve 2,000 acres and then only when the tundra is covered with snow. They urged the Clinton administration to lock up nearly six million acres in national monuments and fifty-eight million acres in roadless areas without any input from state and local governments or citizens, while she wants full involvement of the people directly affected.

Although the environmentalists lost, **the environment will win if the new administration pursues a theme of pragmatic environmentalism.** Here are a few suggestions: allow ranchers to sell their grazing permits to environmental groups on a willing buyer–willing seller basis (the Grand Canyon Trust has tried this on federal lands in southern Utah but has been thwarted by Interior policies); expand the ability for national parks to raise revenues from user fees and to reinvest them where they are collected (Yellowstone is already using fees to generate millions for fixing its decaying infrastructure); reward private landowners for improving endangered species habitat (one environmental group currently compensates ranchers who lose livestock to wolves, another is leasing water to increase stream flows for endangered salmon and steelhead); and establish transferable fishing quotas to give fishers an incentive to reduce overfishing (this approach has proved effective in Alaska's halibut fishery and in New Zealand and Australia).

Writing in the 1930s, Aldo Leopold, the environmentalists' icon, said that "conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest." President Bush and Secretary Norton understand the wisdom of this statement.

In a May 1999 meeting with policy analysts including Norton, then-Governor Bush said, "When I leave office, the air and water will be cleaner, and the land will be better cared for. Your job is to tell me how to make that happen." If the Bush administration uses market approaches and devolves some policy to state and local governments, he will be the environmental president.

— Terry L. Anderson

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University

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surprisingly, these two categories are the ones the White House most frequently cites. But there is currently only $185 billion in savings bonds and $25 billion in bonds issued to foreign governments—which together add up to just 6 percent of the $3.4 trillion debt. (The administration's emphasis on savings bonds is also disingenuous, since even the most vocal debt hawks favor keeping a small U.S. savings bond program when the majority of the federal debt has been retired.) According to Gensler, only $410 billion to $500 billion of the government's debt is genuinely non-redeemable over the next ten years—which leaves Bush much less room for his tax cut. Expect to see a lot of Gensler in the coming weeks. Democrats plan to make him the most popular Treasury securities expert in the country.

Meanwhile, the White House is trying to make the idea of carrying debt a bit more fashionable. One way is to emphasize the popularity of 30-year savings bonds and the cultural attachment some Americans have to them, even though the bonds represent a small portion of the total debt. On Tuesday, when Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer was questioned about the logic behind not paying off all the debt, he responded as if such a plan would entail sending government agents into the homes of bondholders to confiscate their certificates. "[F]rankly," he said, "I think there are a lot of people, particularly elderly Americans, who take comfort in the fact that they own the safest investment in the world, and I am not certain that they would welcome the hand of the United States government coming and taking those bonds away from them." Thanks to the Bush administration, the midnight raids by Treasury Department search-and-seizure teams are, at least temporarily, on hold. ■

Why are the unions against McCain-Feingold?

Futile Labor

By Noam Scheiber

In the two weeks since organized labor reversed course and started lobbying against the campaign-finance-reform bill now winding its way through Congress, goo-goos have been crying hypocrisy. The *New York Times* editorial page scolded the AFL-CIO for its "misguided effort to oppose several provisions of the McCain-Feingold bill." A senior McCain aide groused to the *Times* that "in the past some of these groups had a free pass on the issue of campaign finance reform." And *The Washington Post*'s David Broder lumped the AFL-CIO's gripes together with the "very same constitutional objections [Senator Mitch] McConnell and other opponents . . . have made for years."

So is labor acting crassly, helping to stymie good-government reform to further its political influence? Actually, it's worse than that. Labor is acting crassly and helping to stymie campaign finance reform. By doing so, however, not only will it fail to further its political influence, it may even do itself harm.

Labor's opposition to campaign finance reform stems from two of the McCain-Feingold bill's provisions: restrictions on campaign advertisements by independent groups ("issue ads") and regulation of "coordinated" activities between these same groups and candidates. According to the AFL-CIO's Larry Gold, the lawyer spearheading labor's lobbying push, the issue-ad provision would make it difficult for labor (or businesses) to run ads in support of candidates during the closing weeks of an election but would do little to prevent so-called "501(c)(4)s," which include every organization from the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) to the National Right to Life Committee, from doing so. Needless to say, that kind of partial ban would severely undermine labor's influence within the Democratic Party.

The coordination provision would be even more chilling for labor. It would deem any activity by an organization on a candidate's behalf to be "coordinated"—which, for unions, essentially means "forbidden"—if the organization had even the most superficial contact with the candidate in the past. Borrowing Gold's example, suppose that, just following a senator's election, she meets with union officials, who say they'll support her reelection effort. Then, even if the two sides have no contact whatsoever during the next five years, something as seemingly innocuous as a union-led voter-registration drive in the sixth year would be considered "coordinated" and, hence, illegal.

So labor's opposition to McCain-Feingold is entirely rational, right? Actually, wrong: It's not at all clear labor has anything to worry about. As currently written, the coordination provision is so restrictive it probably couldn't pass muster constitutionally. (A Washington, D.C., circuit court struck down a similar coordination provision in 1999.) And the issue-ad ban presents an even more obvious First Amendment problem: How do you tell private organizations they can't produce commercials using their own money? (Two Michigan district courts have already found a similar restriction unconstitutional.) As Gold himself concedes, "I don't think the chances are very high at all" that the issue-ad provision would withstand constitutional scrutiny.

On the other hand, the one part of McCain-Feingold with a real chance of making it into law—the soft money ban—would benefit labor enormously. For starters, unions raise much less soft money than corporations. As those familiar with the issue point out, cutting soft money across the board would mean cutting $13 of corporate spending for every $1 of labor spending, a trade that labor would take in a heartbeat. Even more importantly, labor's soft money contributions account for only about 12 percent of the Democrats' overall soft money take—most Democratic soft money comes from business. But take away soft money and corporate influence in the Democratic Party collapses. Democrats would suddenly find themselves heavily dependent on union turnout and advertising efforts—essentially a dream come true for labor.

That's exactly the scenario Democrats are worried about. Why? Because many Democrats believe the party's recent

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gains in Congress stem from its improved fund-raising. Traditionally, Republicans have vastly out-fund-raised Democrats—in both hard money (limited contributions that go directly to candidates) and soft money (unlimited contributions to parties that get funneled back to individual candidates). But while Republicans continue to clean up in hard money, in recent years Democrats have pulled even in the soft money department, allowing them to narrow the overall fund-raising gap. Thus, the fear is that, just as Democrats are finally leveling the playing field, a soft money ban would tilt the advantage back to the GOP. As one House Democratic aide familiar with campaign finance puts it, "There's certainly a lot of concern about a soft money ban alone."

Of course, Democrats don't want to admit this publicly. They might like to see campaign finance reform killed, but, given their years of professed support for it, they don't want to end up holding the murder weapon. And, thanks to labor, they may not have to. Campaign finance reform's sponsors are adamant that the legislation be passed as a package. "There's no point in banning soft money if you're going to allow sham issue ads," insists Katie Levinson, an aide to Chris Shays, the Connecticut Republican who's co-sponsoring the House campaign finance bill. So if labor kills the coordination and issue-ad provisions it finds threatening, it will likely kill the entire bill. Which will leave labor with a public relations fiasco and a lost chance to increase its influence in the Democratic Party—and leave Democratic pols laughing all the way to the bank. ■

Look who's for quotas.

Color-Blind

By JONATHAN CHAIT

ARE THERE ANY African Americans remaining among George W. Bush's supporters who haven't been appointed to his administration? In the last few weeks alone, the new president selected Larry Thompson as deputy attorney general, Alphonso Jackson as deputy secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Charles James as head of the Justice Department's antitrust division. And this sub-Cabinet multiracialism follows Bush's appointment of the most ethnically diverse Cabinet in U.S. history.

Eight years ago, Bill Clinton's belabored efforts to achieve ethnic and gender balance in his administration precipitated a raucous debate over affirmative action, quotas, and general left-wing mau-mauing. Conservatives accused Clinton of supporting such evils as "group entitlements" (George Will), while liberal special interests wailed that he hadn't gone far enough. So why has there been barely a ripple of controversy this time around? The answer is that those most inclined to criticize Bush—liberals—generally approve of diversity-mongering. "One authentic accomplishment can be marked down in the new President's favor," editorialized the usually unsympathetic *New Yorker*, "a Cabinet that truly is racially and ethnically inclusive." And those most inclined to criticize affirmative action—conservatives—have turned a blind eye to Bush's flagrant application of it. In a sense, that willful overlooking represents affirmative action's ultimate triumph as a fact of American life. The only difference between the two parties now is that Democrats admit they practice affirmative action but don't admit what affirmative action entails, while Republicans are honest about what affirmative action means but dishonest about the fact that they practice it.

The central lie mustered on affirmative action's behalf is that it does not require compromising the meritocratic ideal. For a variety of historical reasons, blacks and other minorities are underrepresented among America's academic and professional elites. As a result, a president who hires on an entirely color-blind basis—even with special efforts to find minority candidates—will end up with a Cabinet that doesn't look like America.

Honest advocates of affirmative action admit that it is worth sacrificing a little meritocracy for the sake of diversity. But most practitioners won't admit any trade-offs exist. When asked in 1992 if appointing a diverse Cabinet required taking race into account, Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos asserted, "[Clinton is] going to choose the best candidates for the positions." When posed the same question eight years later, Bush spokesman Andy Card replied, "President-elect Bush is picking the very best people."

When pressed, the practitioners of affirmative action typically fudge by insisting they won't let in any candidates who aren't qualified. Clinton, said Stephanopoulos, "has found highly qualified, excellent people for every position so far." A Bush official said of Thompson, "If he wasn't qualified, he wouldn't be appointed." This may be true, but it elides the basic objection. In a pure meritocracy, positions should go not just to those who are qualified—which could mean nothing more than clearing some minimum threshold—but to those who are the *most* qualified. Every black student admitted to Harvard is qualified to attend an exclusive university. That doesn't mean all of them would have gotten in if they were white.

CONSERVATIVES USED TO skewer the nebulous logic of racial preferences. Indeed, they spent a good part of Clinton's first months in office excoriating him for his "'diversity' requirement" (as a *Wall Street Journal* editorial put it). But Bush's appointments have put them in a tricky spot. The president's allies, most of whom oppose affirmative action, have been forced to maintain the extravagant falsehood that he has brought together such a diverse assemblage purely on merit, without resorting to (in the *Journal*'s words again) "'quotas,' 'set asides,' and 'racial preferences.'" "Clinton did it on the basis of affirmative action," claims conservative talk-show host John McLaughlin. "[Bush's] Cabinet was not formed on the basis of that. It was formed on the basis of knowledge, skill."

It's a whopper that can't withstand even the most casual scrutiny. If Clinton couldn't produce a diverse Cabinet without using racial and gender preferences, what reason is there to think Bush could? In fact, Bush has almost certainly compromised merit significantly more than Clinton did. Why?

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Because when a president staffs his administration, he's constrained not simply by the general universe of political elites but by the sub-universe of his supporters. And Bush's supporters are far less diverse than Clinton's: African Americans, for instance, constituted about one-fifth of Clinton's voters in 1992, compared with one-fiftieth of Bush's in 2000. The idea that an utterly color-blind winnowing of the GOP political class would result in such a racially balanced Cabinet is mathematically absurd.

Clinton may have bowed to the demands of liberal special interests, but he still had a reasonably deep pool of minority political talent from which to choose. Even Alexis Herman—probably Clinton's most hackish sop to the diversity lobby—had experience in national politics dating back to the Carter era. Bush, by contrast, has appointed to his Cabinet such uncredentialed figures as Rod Paige, the Houston schools superintendent, and Mel Martinez, the executive of Orange County, Florida. And if you think these extraordinary promotions reflect Bush's reverence for the wisdom of local officials, ask yourself how many white men he elevated directly from the county level to his Cabinet.

To be fair, Thompson has much stronger qualifications to be deputy attorney general. But the particulars of his appointment strongly suggest that the administration desperately wanted to put an African American in that job. Bush advisers confided that Thompson's race would help insulate John Ashcroft from the accusations of racial insensitivity that dogged his confirmation. "If anyone opposes Thompson," a Bush official told *The Washington Post*, "it underscores that the opposition to Ashcroft is not race-based, it is politics-based." Larry Thompson, in all likelihood, filled a quota.

At Clarence Thomas's 1991 Supreme Court confirmation hearings, a friend of his testified, "We both know many outstanding, highly trained, and capable black American professionals and businesspeople who are frustrated because they are viewed only as members of a group, who got their positions through quotas rather than because of their qualifications as individuals." That friend was Larry Thompson. Looks as if someone else is going to have to carry the anti-quota banner from now on. ■

London Dispatch

Fin de Dome

By Kate Galbraith

What's the retail value of a six-foot plastic hamster guarding a fat block of plastic cheese? Who knows? But if that hamster has spent a year crouching in Britain's much-maligned Millennium Dome, it goes for £3,000. "I hope she likes hamsters," quipped the winning bidder, speaking of his wife.

Kate Galbraith is an assistant editor at *Economist.com*.

Where the Millennium Dome is concerned, rip-off is a relative term. After all, the Dome itself—heralded by Tony Blair as the ultimate symbol of the new Britain—has drained national coffers of close to £1 billion. And this week's auction aimed to get some of that money back. The event—a gargantuan garage sale of the infrastructure and exhibitions that filled the now-shuttered Dome—yielded some state-of-the-art equipment plus a bewildering jumble of kitsch. The latter included a giant heart (sold for £1,500), a clump of artificial trees, a mannequin dressed in a scarlet bra with a scarf draped across her lap, plastic bags of Dome key rings, and countless road signs and costumes. A few thousand people, mumbling about the "historic value" of the leftovers, packed an on-site auditorium on the first day of the bidding to scrounge for relics. But, while designed as an exercise in fiscal repentance, the Dome auction ended up recycling the grandiose absurdity of the original project. "I've come for the brain," smirked one viewer, referring to part of the Dome's giant exhibition on the human body, auctioned off in parts. "Mine's wore out." His wasn't the only one.

From its beginning, the Dome was meant as a massive homage to something. But that something was never entirely clear. The Tory Party originated the idea in the mid-'90s; then it became the beacon of New Labour. The one-year celebration of the millennium—which creators hoped would rival the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the 1951 Festival of Britain—was also meant as tribute to a new, forward-looking Britain striding confidently into the twenty-first century. Oh, yes—and it was supposed to revive Greenwich, a largely derelict industrial area in southeast London.

But the project went awry. True, the Dome recorded high visitor satisfaction and emerged as Britain's top ticketed attraction, but the 12 million visitors forecast for the year dwindled to 6.5 million, and the project kept eating money. Pilloried by the press for its peculiar exhibits and shaky finances, the Dome became Labour's albatross. That few heads have rolled—save that of Peter Mandelson, a former Dome minister who resigned after allegations surfaced that he did favors for a pair of rich Indian businessmen who helped bankroll the Dome—is testament to either the indulgence of the British people or the arrogance of their leaders.

Politically and financially, the auction was a fig leaf. The well-publicized sell-off aimed to recoup £3 million—admittedly the merest splinter of the Dome's £1 billion loss, but at least it allowed the government to appear to be doing something. (Letting the Blairs cart off the furniture, while fitting, would have been uncouth.) Inadvertently, however, the auction became another characteristically unfortunate twist in the Dome saga. Logistics were fuzzy; bidding was scheduled for weekdays, so Saturday shoppers, who might have raised the price of the giant hamster to £5,000, were absent; and the auction moved much too quickly for most Internet bidders to keep up. In good Dome tradition, the auction was also a bit fleecy: The auctioneers—a firm elegantly named Henry Butcher—creamed off 10 percent of the hammer price. And insult was added to injury when David James, head of the New Millennium Experience Company, revealed a few weeks ago

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that the Dome's directors were eyeing bonuses that could be close to £150,000—or one-twentieth of the auction proceeds.

Meanwhile, the Dome's dismembering has spilled the structure's dirty secrets. During the auction preview, erstwhile exhibition materials were strewn about. A massive eye lay on the carpet, split into its orange cornea, its thick, red, twisted rope of optic nerve, and a couple of glass shells that were once its eyeball. More worrisome than the scraps, though, were the rooms crammed with video cameras, Palm Pilots, computers, sound systems, and catering equipment. Most of the technical loot is state-of-the-art and nearly brand-new. Remarked one youthful browser, "I can see where all the money has gone now."

Perhaps the most potent evidence of bureaucratic debacle is the fact that the Dome itself is still on the market. The irony is almost too crisp. The government insists that any successful bidder preserve the Dome—at 365 meters in diameter the world's largest. But, while there are eccentrics willing to spend £900 on a mannequin in an English soccer shirt, no one is yet fool enough—or no fool is yet rich enough—to invest in the Dome. The game of musical bidding drags on. Legacy, a property consortium that was long the government's preferred bidder, was ditched in mid-February after objections to its plan to create a dot-com business park. A French bidder (and former Dome chief executive) is showing interest, as are a Japanese bank and a coalition led by the duke of Westminster, which is said to favor converting the Dome into a concert stadium.

At the risk of oversimplifying, the lesson is that government blockbusters are hazardous. The Dome, after all, is hardly London's only millennial flop. As the *Independent* recently reported, the Millennium Bridge, Norman Foster's slender and pricey "blade of light" across the Thames to the new Tate Modern, opened six months into the new year and then promptly closed for repairs when the bridge swayed wildly. A £1 million study has identified the needed modifications, which should allow the bridge to reopen before Christmas 2001. The price tag? Likely another £5 million. A fiasco and a nice symbol. The Britons are a practical people: They looked at all these extravagant pathways to the new millennium, and they decided they were better off getting there on their own. ■

GOP v. recount, take two.

Media Hounds

By Michael Crowley

BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

Brooksville is a dreary rural town about an hour north of Tampa that greets visitors from the interstate with a dilapidated bowling alley, a septic-tank dealership, and a string of old cars rotting by the side of the road. Ordinarily it's a sleepy, out-of-the-way place. But it's home to the Hernando County election office, and so, for a few hours last week, Brooksville was ground zero in the ongoing inquiry into exactly who won a majority of the roughly six million Florida votes cast for president of the United States.

On a humid Wednesday morning, Hernando's tiny election office is crowded with visitors: four researchers from the consortium of major media organizations (including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, CNN, and the Associated Press) reexamining all 180,000 Florida ballots that registered no vote for president; two reporters from *The Miami Herald*, which is conducting its own recount; and four Republican activists observing the proceedings. All stare solemnly as county election workers gingerly hold up Hernando's rejected ballots for examination one by one.

What they see is at once funny and sad. The county uses a fill-in-the-bubble "optical scan" system, and dozens of ballots show two, three, or more bubbles filled in the presidential column. On some ballots the entire column is filled in. More than a few contain votes for every candidate except one. Some absentee voters apparently tried in vain to white-out reconsidered votes. One patriot wrote in "Bart and Homer Simson [*sic*]"; another scrawled the words "Terrible Choice!" across the page.

But amid the mass of incoherent ballots, election workers turn up several that express a clear preference for one candidate—usually Al Gore. By my count, Gore picks up a net total of ten votes here: a small dent in George W. Bush's official 537-vote statewide margin of victory but potentially significant given Hernando's tiny voting population of about 91,000. All in all, Brooksville seems to be playing its role in a tedious but sober and fair-minded effort to discern the intent of the Florida voters on November 7, 2000.

But not according to Frank Colletti, chairman of the Hernando County Republican Executive Committee. "It's absurd," he booms, waving his hand toward the stacks of ballots in the county election office. "There's everything in the world [on the ballots]. They're going to find whatever they want to find." A Republican colleague of Colletti's whose name I don't catch adds his two cents: "All those papers fit together with the same political bent."

Sound familiar? It should. In order to discredit a media survey they fear will discover enough missed Gore votes to undermine Bush's tenuous claim to presidential legitimacy, GOP activists are reopening the anti-recount playbook that helped put their man in office in the first place. Their goal: to transform a deliberate, comprehensive ballot review conducted by unbiased outside researchers into a chaotic, corrupt, and unfair process, a circus of fallen chads and incompetent methodology conducted by partisan hacks seeking to overturn the election. And the Republicans are doing a pretty good job. After all, they've done it once before.

The media consortium has gone to great lengths to make its count professional and unbiased. Rather than dispatch their own reporters, consortium members hired the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), a nonprofit social science institute at the University of Chicago, to run the ballot review. NORC designed an elaborate classification system, giving its researchers standardized

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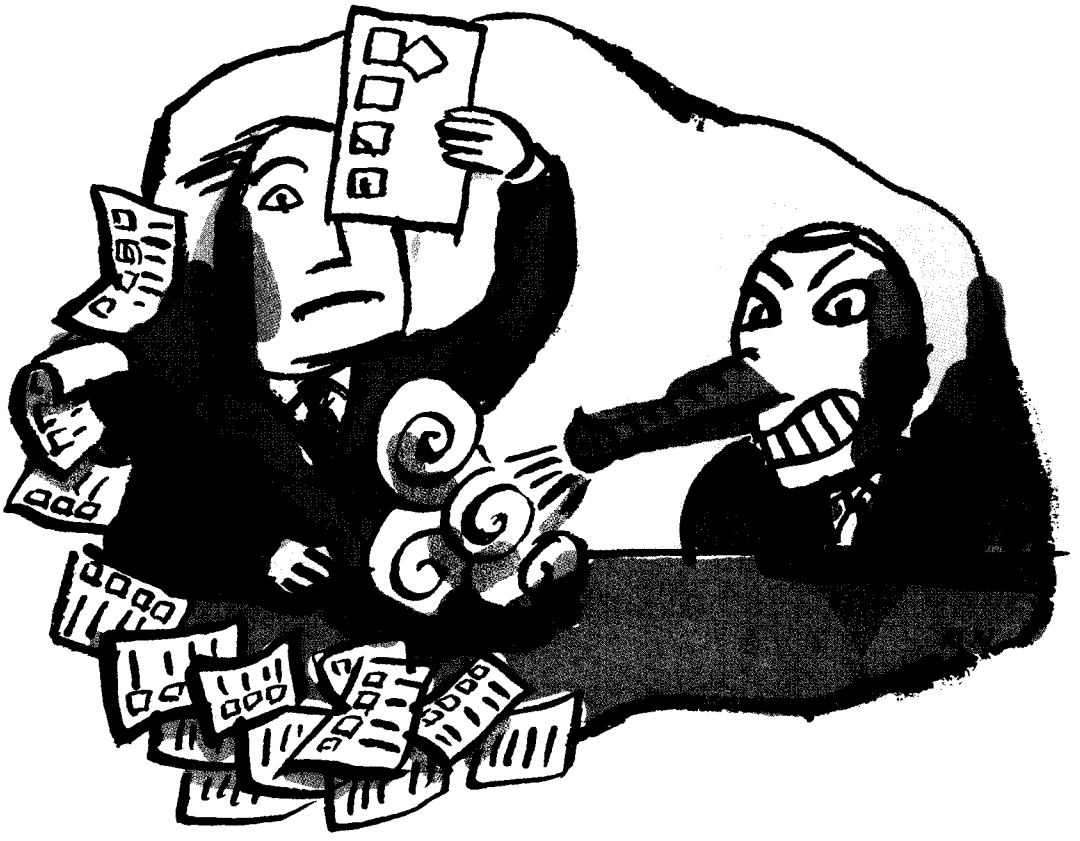

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forms and codes to categorize ballots as objectively and in as much detail as possible. Researchers in counties using punch-card ballots not only note, for instance, which chads are detached from a ballot and by how many corners. They can also choose from more nuanced descriptions such as "Dimpled chad, no sunlight," "Dimpled chad, sunlight," or "Dimple with or without sunlight, off chad, on border above." In the case of optical-scan ballots, the options include "Circled party name," "Other mark on or near candidate name," and "Arrow/oval marked other than fill, then erased or partially erased." Every ballot is examined independently by three researchers, all of whose conclusions will be entered into NORC's final database. In order to be hired, researchers cannot have worked for or donated money to a state- or national-level political candidate in the past ten years. They're even required to pass eye exams.

Moreover, unlike other recent ballot reexaminations, the consortium is statewide and counts both "undervotes," which result when a machine fails to detect any presidential choice on a ballot (an undetached chad, for instance, or a bubble circled rather than filled in), and "overvotes," which result when a machine detects multiple votes for candidates. During the election recount, the Gore campaign focused almost exclusively on undervotes, which were believed to be concentrated in poorer, Democratic-leaning areas where older, punch-card ballots were used. But over the past few months partial reviews by Florida newspapers have suggested that Gore might have had a far larger advantage in ballots spoiled by overvoting. A *Miami Herald/USA Today* examination of Miami-Dade County's undervotes released this week, for example, showed Gore picking up a mere 49 votes at best; an *Orlando Sentinel* survey of overvotes in smaller (and highly Republican) Lake County, by contrast, discovered 130 votes clearly intended for Gore—many of them cases in which Gore's bubble was marked and his name was also entered in the "write-in" area. The Lake County figures, along with similar results from Orange County, have led many observers to predict that the consortium, analyzing NORC's data, will find more than enough lost Gore votes statewide to overtake Bush in a comprehensive statewide tally.

Which is why the GOP is preemptively trying to discredit whatever numbers the consortium ultimately comes up with. As soon as NORC researchers began their work, the GOP dispatched party activists, at considerable expense, to oversee the ballot reviews in all 67 counties. "We do keep an eye on the media," explains state GOP spokeswoman Portia Palmer.

And so it's déjà vu. During the official recount, Republicans depicted county election workers as fatigued little old ladies who couldn't handle the strain of counting ballots for hours. This time around, they've pounced on the fact that NORC is employing temporary local hires (always under the supervision of a NORC team leader) so they can paint the counters as poorly trained, unreliable "temps." "We have problems with their training and their ability, and it just varies widely from county to county," says David Johnson, executive director of the Florida GOP. "In one case [a GOP activist] thought the temp wasn't able to see clearly enough to see a dimple or a pinprick.... There's an overall obvious lack of preparation on their part." In Brevard County, Republican election supervisor Fred Galey snorts dismissively, "They got some temporary employees and trained them for about an hour."

Remember how Republicans complained in November that county workers were shifting their standards in the middle of the recount? Those talking points have been dusted off, too. *Washington Post* editor Dan Keating, a spokesman for the consortium, says Republicans have accused consortium workers of redesigning their evaluation forms in the middle of their review; he suspects GOP activists were confused by the use of separate forms for

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different counties' voting systems. And then there are the GOP press releases touting uncorroborated "eyewitness" accounts of recount malfeasance. One recent release declares that a "clearly intoxicated man reviewed hundreds of ballots in Clearwater." (Keating says he's baffled by the charge.) Another release expresses alarm over reports of "chads falling from at least two ballots," arguing that it "highlights the arbitrary nature of the ballot evaluation effort currently underway and the effects of repeated handling on fragile paper ballots."

Of course, should one of the contested media surveys unexpectedly show Bush coming out on top, it abruptly ceases to be a crime against democracy. When the *Herald*'s Miami-Dade undervote count showed only a minimal Gore gain, for example, Republicans were only too happy to lay aside their media-bashing and trumpet the new count as further evidence of Bush's legitimacy. "Now, after a ballot review using liberal standards unprecedented under the law," said Mark Wallace, a Miami lawyer for the Republican Party, "we find President Bush would still win. At some point the Democratic National Committee needs to accept that, and that time is now."

And, if all else fails, the GOP has its own recount to fall back on, one certain to muddy the waters even further. Their insistence that all this recounting undermines the presidency notwithstanding, Republican operatives in Florida are keeping their own tally of the ballot recounts and, as one press release puts it, applying "a clear legal standard established by the United States Supreme Court ... i.e. a clearly punched out chad for punchcards or a clearly filled out oval for optiscan machines." The result? Bush's lead has grown from 537 votes to 843. Who would have guessed? ■

Why the best offense is a good missile defense.

Offensive Line

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

THANK GOD FOR missile defense. For Washington foreign policy types who spent the last decade snoring through panels at the Brookings Institution, the salad days are here again. Just when it seemed no one cared about national security issues, back comes missile defense, and it's as if the Star Wars debates of the 1980s never ended. Nuclear strategists whom no one's listened to for ten years walk with a bounce in their step. Congressmen who couldn't find North Korea on a map lecture about the moral imperative of protecting America from Kim Jong Il's missile arsenal. Sam and Cokie, characters on "The West Wing"—everyone's talking about Star Wars again. That most of them don't have the slightest idea what they're talking about only adds to the déjà vu.

But what really makes it feel like the 1980s is that in an era when ideology has been banished from most foreign policy debates, ideologues have made this one their exclusive property. Overnight, all the Reagan-era battle lines have reappeared. On one side is the old Zabar's consensus, featuring the *New York Times* editorial page, *The New York Review of Books*, and a parade of New School professors. They've brought back all the Reagan-era arguments: Missile defense will destabilize the international scene and spur a new arms race, and it won't even work. On the other side, the loudest clamor for missile defense comes from a chorus of congressional yahoos who see in the program an opportunity to erect Fortress America. If we can build a shield to protect the United States from attack, the argument goes, we won't have to send troops abroad in search of dragons to slay.

As it happens, all this ideological posturing bears little relation to the world in which we now live. In fact, the strategic logic of missile defense runs entirely counter to the claims of isolationist champions and liberal critics alike. The real rationale for missile defense is that without it an adversary armed with long-range missiles can, as Robert Joseph, President Bush's counterproliferation specialist at the National Security Council (NSC), argues, "hold American and allied cities hostage and thereby deter us from intervention." Or, as a recent RAND study on missile defense puts it, "[B]allistic missile defense is not simply a *shield* but an *enabler* of U.S. action." In other words, missile defense is about preserving America's ability to wield power abroad. It's not about defense. It's about offense. And that's exactly why we need it.

Frances Fitzgerald notwithstanding, the debate over antiballistic missile (ABM) systems began not in the Reagan era but in the Roosevelt era, with the appearance of the first operational ballistic missile, the German V-2, late in World War II. (After being propelled outside Earth's atmosphere by rocket engines, ballistic missiles rely on gravity.) Within a year of the war's end, the Pentagon launched two programs to explore ways to counter the threat. By the mid-'50s, first the Air Force and then the Army had devised ABM proposals that would combine long-distance radar with nuclear-tipped interceptor rockets. The Army moved forward with its ABM program in the 1960s and by decade's end was set to begin construction. (A missile defense system was, in fact, briefly deployed—guarding a single missile site in North Dakota—before being scrapped in 1974.)

During the same decade, however, Robert McNamara, defense secretary under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, undermined the case for missile defense by enshrining

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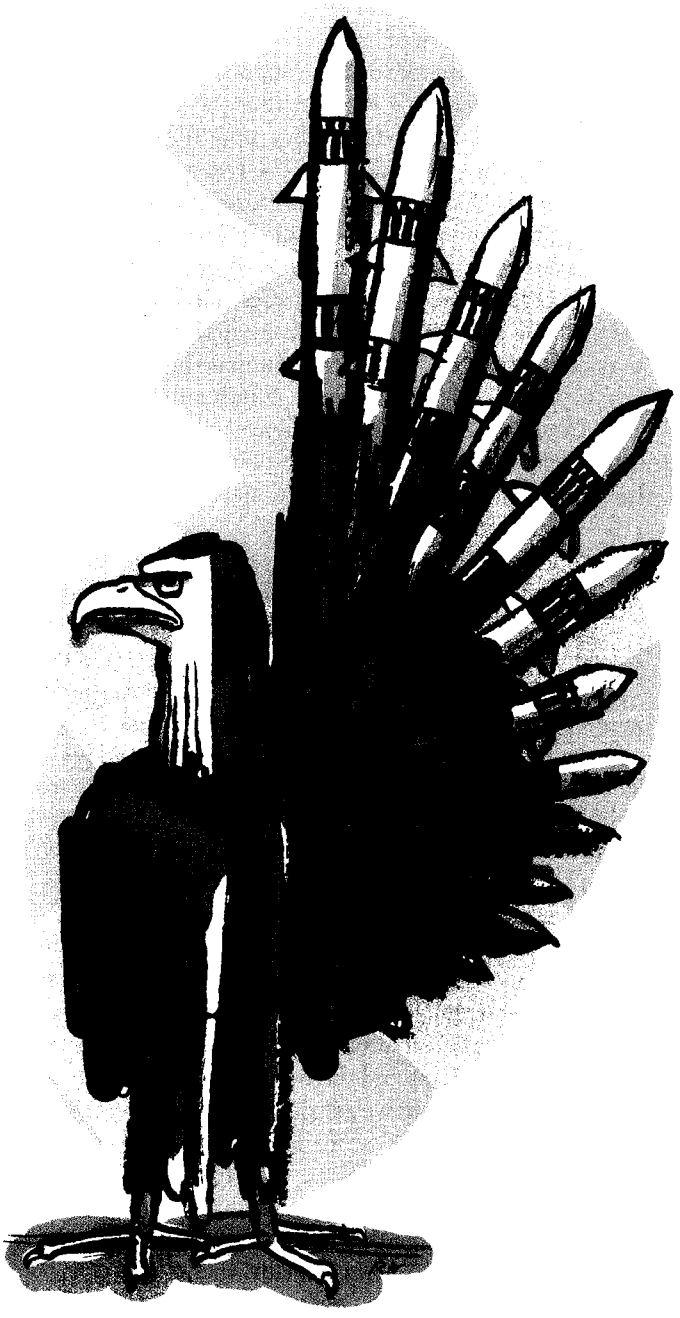
in official policy a version of deterrence theory, Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), which held that the surest way to avert nuclear holocaust was for the Soviet Union and the United States to remain vulnerable to each other's arsenals. Consequently, MAD's defenders deemed anything that diminished this mutual vulnerability—particularly missile defense—a threat to stability. It was a curious argument, and not everyone bought it. Strategists like Albert Wohlstetter and Herman Kahn continued to make the case for missile defense, as did scientists like Edward Teller, who argued that it was better to "shoot at enemy missiles than to suffer attack and then have to shoot at people in return." Nonetheless, after years of bitter debate, much of it poisoned by the toxic residue of Vietnam, the McNamara logic prevailed. In 1972 the Nixon administration signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Moscow, effectively banning national missile defense (NMD).

The Star Wars debate of the 1980s, set off by President Reagan's proposal to build space-based defenses, basically amounted to a rehashing of "the great ABM debate" of the 1960s. But the technology had grown more sophisticated and the arguments more crude. Strategists and scientists faded into the background, supplanted by Republican revolutionaries and bien-pensant leftists. Nothing was ever deployed, which was just as well, since the technology wasn't there and, even if it had been, the Soviets could have easily overwhelmed it with their huge arsenal. And then the USSR crumbled, ending the argument. Now, with President Bush's pledge to deploy an ABM system, the debate enters its latest installment. Only this time something's different: the world.

ASIDE FROM THE absence of Soviet communism, the main thing that's different is that more countries possess ballistic missile technology. In the past few years alone, India and Pakistan have set off a combined total of twelve atomic explosions; Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, and China have test-launched ballistic missiles; Iraq, Syria, and Libya have reportedly acquired missile components; and both China and Russia have continued to export ballistic missile technology throughout the Middle East. Still, U.S. policymakers have been slow to recognize the danger. As late as 1998, Joint Chiefs Chairman Henry Shelton averred that "the intelligence community can provide the necessary warning" if one of these countries was developing "an ICBM threat to the United States." Alas, just a week after Shelton's pronouncement—and with no warning whatsoever from the intelligence community—North Korea demonstrated its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capability by launching a three-stage rocket over Japan. Intelligence analysts promptly dropped their sanguine assessment of the threat. "The probability that a missile armed with [weapons of mass destruction] would be used against U.S. forces or interests," a CIA-sponsored study asserted last year, "is higher today than during most of the cold war and will continue to grow."

The logic of the threat is simple. If we take North Korean, Chinese, and Iranian officials at their word, American "hegemony"—and, in particular, America's overwhelming military superiority—represents the single greatest challenge to their security. But, as the Gulf war showed, the United States can't be deterred with conventional forces alone. Ballistic missiles, by contrast, have proved they can do the job. There is, to begin with, the example of the Soviet Union, whose ICBM arsenal for decades kept the United States from confronting Soviet forces directly. More recently, North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have enabled that shambles of a country to blackmail the West into showering it with blandishments and concessions. Likewise, senior Pentagon officials say that China's repeated offers to incinerate Los Angeles linger in their calculations over how to respond to a conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

Nor have these examples been lost on states rushing to acquire long-range missiles: Their mere possession will put these countries "off limits" for U.S. intervention. "If [Ameri-



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cans] know that you have a deterrent force capable of hitting the United States, they would not be able to hit you," Muammar Qaddafi declared after the United States bombed Libya. "Consequently, we should build this [missile] force so that they and others will no longer think about an attack." Indeed, facing a dozen little Soviet Unions with even a theoretical capability of hitting America or her allies, the United States is vastly less likely to pursue a forward-leaning foreign policy. "[A]cquiring long-range ballistic missiles armed with a weapon of mass destruction probably will enable weaker countries to do three things that they otherwise might not be able to do: deter, constrain, and harm the United States," Robert Walpole, the national intelligence officer for strategic and nuclear programs, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1999. If, for instance, Saddam Hussein possessed even one ICBM, U.S. forces wouldn't be bombing Iraq routinely or stationing troops nearby. "The idea is to keep us out of [an opponent's] neighborhood and prevent us from coming to the assistance of our allies—it'll work, too," says a senior administration official.

Hence, when a missile defense opponent like Robert Reich writes in *The American Prospect* that the Bush team's plan exemplifies an "America-first policy" and "the new insularity," he has things exactly backward. The real argument for missile defense is that we need it to prevent adversaries from deterring us from the kind of interventions that liberals like Reich, even more than conservatives, spent the 1990s championing. Oddly enough, foreign critics, who carp that missile defense will cement U.S. hegemony and make Americans "masters of the world," grasp its rationale better than critics here at home. Missile defense, China's ambassador to the U.N. Conference on Disarmament complained recently, would grant the United States "absolute freedom in using or threatening to use force in international relations." He's right.

THE FACT THAT ballistic missiles, as a 1999 National Intelligence Estimate points out, "are not envisioned at the outset as operational weapons of war, but primarily as strategic weapons of deterrence and coercive diplomacy" points to another flaw in the anti-ABM argument. Missile defense opponents argue that long-range missiles (and defenses against them) have become passé since rogue regimes surely intend, as Clinton National Security Adviser Sandy Berger put it in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, to deliver "weapons of mass destruction by means far less sophisticated than an ICBM: a ship, plane or suitcase." Maybe. But a suitcase makes for much less menacing satellite imagery than an ICBM—which is to say, it has virtually no worth as a deterrent, much less any domestic political utility. Besides, if ballistic missiles are yesterday's news, then why are the North Koreans and the Iranians building them in the first place? "How about we get rid of our aircraft carriers and B-52s while we're at it?" scoffs a senior Bush adviser when confronted with the man-in-the-van argument. "You defend against what you can, and to argue that these missile programs aren't threats, or that because there are other threats we should ignore this one, is just silly."

Opponents of missile defense also rely heavily on McNamara-era logic. As Berger puts it, "[T]he basic logic of the ABM [Treaty] has not been repealed—that if either side has a defensive system the other believes can neutralize its offensive capabilities, mutual deterrence is undermined and the world is a less safe place." He's half right. If the United States fields missile defenses, *mutual* deterrence will indeed be undermined. In fact, it will be entirely one-sided in America's favor. Not only would a credible missile defense system diminish the ability of rogue states to deter the United States, but, because these states have so few missiles, even a limited defense would, if anything, diminish their confidence in their arsenals. Deterrence and missile defense may have been inherently incompatible when the United States faced an adversary armed with 9,000 warheads. But when the point is to deter a group of states that, between them, possess fewer than two dozen ICBMs, enshrining defenselessness in official policy makes no sense.

The difference between an adversary armed with a single warhead and one armed with 9,000 isn't the only distinction critics like Berger refuse to grasp. They also fail to consider how proliferation undermines cold war deterrence theory. If MAD, as Henry Kissinger has written, was "barely plausible when there was only one nuclear opponent," it's certainly less so today. That's because, in an era of proliferation, the numbers have become much less favorable for the United States. Instead of betting that one adversary will think like Berger, we are now pinning our survival on the hope that six or seven will.

Which brings us to the nature of those adversaries, a subject about which the anti-missile-defense lobby is remarkably sanguine. "[E]ven fanatical, paranoid regimes are deterred by the prospect of catastrophic consequences," Spurgeon Keeny, then executive director of the Arms Control Association, advised in a 1994 *New York Times* op-ed. Never mind that recent history is littered with paranoid regimes that forgot to be deterred by catastrophic consequences. Before we send Keeny to hammer out a SALT accord with Saddam, his ilk need to explain much more convincingly how missiles transform Third World dictators into rational choice theorists. Writing of "the 'psychological' element in deterrence, on which all else depends," Jonathan Schell, dean of nuclear abolitionists, notes that a leader's "state of mind—his self-interest, his sanity, his prudence, his self-control, his clear-sightedness—is the real foundation of his country's and everyone else's survival. In short, he must *decide* that the world he lives in is not one in which aggression pays off." Sanity, prudence, and self-control, needless to say, are not the first qualities that leap to mind when you think of leaders like Saddam and Qaddafi. In any case, you don't have to be paranoid to miss the logic of MAD. Simple miscalculation will do.

OF COURSE, THERE'S more to U.S. foreign policy than relations with Iraq and other rogues. And, sure enough, the contention that missile defense will imperil America's relations with everyone else has become a favorite cliché of the anti-missile-defense chorus. The claim, though, is sheer invention. The Europeans have already rolled over. During

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his recent visit to the Continent, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld brusquely told them that America was going to build an ABM system and there was nothing they could do about it. In the weeks since, officials from the European Union, Britain, Germany, and even France have lined up to declare that the United States has the right to deploy. In fact, serious European resistance has all but collapsed.

Russia, too, has nothing to worry about—and its officials know it. Unlike their predecessors in the 1980s, today's proposed missile defenses, which are being designed to intercept a much smaller number of warheads, pose no threat whatsoever to Moscow's huge arsenal. Indeed, Boris Yeltsin and, just last week, Vladimir Putin have even proposed joining forces with the West to build missile defenses against rogue states. For all their recent bluster, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said on a visit to Moscow last month, "[i]n the end, the Russians are going to accept it." As for the ABM Treaty, the other signatory—the Soviet Union—no longer exists. And, even when it did, it never paid the treaty much heed. In fact, the Soviets ringed the country with anti-missile systems, which still shield Russia today. That doesn't mean the accord should necessarily be abandoned. But neither should U.S. policymakers grant Russia veto power over America's ability to defend itself against unrelated threats.

As for the suggestion that missile defense will provoke China into what a recent petition by American sinologists described as "negative steps that would undermine American security," it's too late. Those "negative steps"—including unchecked missile proliferation and an arms buildup—have been under way for over a decade. Indeed, just two weeks ago U.S. bombers had to avoid hitting Chinese personnel working to upgrade Iraq's air defense systems. As the NSC's Joseph wrote recently, "China is modernizing its missile and nuclear arsenal whether or not the United States deploys missile defenses." And members of the Bush team contend privately that China's exports of missile technology and the expansion of its own missile program helped create the imperative for missile defense in the first place. Even so, ICBMs aren't free, and China has only about 20. Multiplying that arsenal several times over would require huge trade-offs. "If they build up aggressively," argues a senior Bush administration official, "there goes their trade relations with us, their multilateral diplomacy, maybe even their economy."

THE DECISION, IN any case, has already been made—first by the Clinton administration and now by the Bush team: The United States is going to build a missile defense system. The question that matters is no longer if but how. Alas, here too the discussion has been a national embarrassment. Even though the systems under review today are limited and based on land and at sea, opponents of missile defense are still railing about what *Washington Post* hysteric Mary McGrory has revealed as "Bush's grandiose scheme for a real, all-out Star Wars scenario." Meanwhile, the right, too, has shown little interest in debating the competing merits of land- and sea-based missile defenses. Its approach is, instead, faith-based: Build it and it will come.

Within the U.S. government, however, a serious debate is under way. The ground-based option, slated for construction on a desolate Alaskan island, has the momentum. Unfortunately, it has few of the merits. In fact, all it has going for it is the ABM Treaty, which prohibits sea-based national missile defenses. To comply with the accord, the Clinton administration originally planned to erect a missile defense platform in North Dakota. Placing the system there had only one drawback: It offered protection to the continental United States but left parts of Alaska and Hawaii to fend for themselves. Ted Stevens, Alaska's senior senator and, more importantly, the head of the Senate Appropriations Committee, wasn't going to leave his constituents vulnerable to ballistic missile attack. So he went ballistic himself. By the time he finished, the Clinton White House had decided to relocate the site to Alaska.

The program, though, is a mess. First, it won't work. The problem isn't so much its well-publicized test failures (what failed in the most recent test was 50-year-old rocket technology that even North Korea has mastered) but a combination of flaws inherent in its design. The Alaska program can only intercept missiles well into their flight trajectories—that is, as they close in on the United States at a speed of about 15,000 miles per hour. Hence, the system would have only one shot at an incoming missile. Worse, that shot would likely have to maneuver through a cloud of decoys and countermeasures that ICBMs can deploy en route. Finally, the Alaska site will function reliably only against missile threats from East Asia. But a missile launched from, say, Iran or Iraq would be coming from the other direction. Given adequate time and resources, American technicians may solve these problems. Yet there's a conceptual defect they can never remedy—namely, that a U.S.-based missile defense amounts to just that. It abandons America's allies to their fates, offering Americans marginal protection but leaving countries like Israel and Japan defenseless.

IN TRUTH, FEW experts champion the Alaska program. One of the reasons derives from the realization—arrived at rather late in the debate—that water covers 70 percent of the Earth's surface. This simple fact has enormous strategic and technical implications. First, it offers a way around the problem of decoys and multiple warheads. Missile interceptors stationed on U.S. ships, which would patrol the coasts of rogue states, could shoot down missiles in their initial boost phase—that is, before they could deploy countermeasures and while their engines were still emitting an easily detectable plume of flame. Trying to destroy a missile as it lifts off, as opposed to when it's about to land on you, makes sense on several counts. Aside from solving the countermeasure dilemma, it's a lot easier to hit. As anyone who has seen a televised space launch knows, rockets travel relatively slowly during their initial ascent—much more slowly than when they streak back to Earth.

Equally important, a sea-based defense would offer the United States more than one opportunity to bring down an incoming missile. And, as physicist Richard Garwin points out, "It is much easier to put a lid on North Korea, a country the size of Mississippi, than it is to put an umbrella over

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the whole of the United States." If a missile did get through the first line of defense—or if it was launched from, say, China's vast interior, which no boost-phase interceptor could reach in time—American forces could conceivably have as many shots at it as there were ships stationed along the weapon's trajectory to the United States.

And, unlike a U.S.-based umbrella, a sea-based system wouldn't exclude America's friends. The mere fact that missile defense ships could be deployed to war zones as part of larger naval armadas gives them an immediately recognizable offensive dimension. Like aircraft carriers, such ships could project power in ways no concrete slab in Alaska could. If, as the Bush team insists, the strategic rationale for missile defense really is an internationalist one, then a sea-based system has all the advantages. The Alaska program, by contrast, follows the minimalist logic of Fortress America—that, as Alaska's Stevens wrote last month, "We can and we must defend our homeland!"

There's also a cost-benefit calculation. According to Congressional Budget Office estimates, the total cost of a ground-based program could run $60 billion. By contrast, the Pentagon has put the price tag of a sea-based defense at between $16 billion and $19 billion, while others have put it at half that. To be sure, when the cost of satellite-based sensors is factored into the equation, those projections may end up being too optimistic. Still, a sea-based system would build on an existing program: the Navy's Aegis air defense system, which has already been funded to the tune of $50 billion. And both the Clinton administration and the Pentagon report that one could be built with existing technologies.

What—you thought we were decades, if not centuries, from possessing the know-how to make missile defense work? In truth, NMD technology has matured well beyond what its detractors admit. The United States already fields a theater missile defense system, and current proposals aren't nearly as ambitious as the space-based plans of the Reagan era. In fact, the Clinton administration purposely slowed down the Aegis's interceptor rocket to ensure it would *not* be usable against ICBMs and thereby violate the ABM Treaty. And, as boost-phase proponents (and prominent 1980s Star Wars critics) like Garwin and MIT technology Professor Theodore Postol point out, because this type of missile defense system targets rockets while they are still moving slowly and before they can deploy countermeasures, it's far less daunting technically than the Alaska program.

ANALYSTS ESTIMATE THAT, with a new, more powerful missile interceptor and other upgrades to Aegis cruisers, the United States could begin deploying a sea-based defense in about seven or eight years. That's too long for some. President Bush has pledged to construct a system "at the earliest possible date." And a popular consensus has emerged that an Alaska-based defense could be completed more quickly. Several Republican senators, as well as representatives from the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization who have been working for years on the ground-based plan, favor continuing the Clinton program.

Until recently, the Bush team argued otherwise. Rumsfeld's chief of staff, Stephen Cambone, and Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley publicly derided the Clinton program as ineffective. And Joseph, Bush's NSC missile defense point man, wrote that the Alaska program "has become so contrived that it will have only a minimal capability against near-term threats." Even Bush called it "flawed."

BUT THAT WAS then. According to members of the Bush team and senior Pentagon officials, the White House is now considering proceeding with at least an Alaska-based radar system and possibly more. "Sea-based is unquestionably the better option, and we're going to pursue it," says an administration official. "But there's been a lot of work done on [Alaska], none done on Aegis, and we may end up doing both. Also, it gives us near-term insurance against North Korea." Two missile defense systems, of course, offer more protection than one. But in practice building anything more than a radar facility in Alaska would exact a high opportunity cost. To begin with, it would divert resources from the more promising system. In return, it would achieve minimal, if any, gains for U.S. security—and none for America's allies.

Equally important, missile defense funding comes from the military budget. But, as it stands, the military is already underfunded by about $30 billion annually, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Exactly how the Bush team would fund not one but two missile defense systems while rebuilding America's conventional forces remains anyone's guess. "There's no free lunch," says Michael Vickers, a military budget expert at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "NMD is an unfunded mandate, and you just can't do missile defense and much else at current costs." One solution, of course, would be to boost defense expenditures. But Bush insists there will be no new money for defense this year, and he has proposed a $1.6 trillion tax cut, which ensures there won't be much in the future either.

So where will the money come from? The Bush team says it plans to cut several major weapons programs and streamline the Armed Forces. Alas, the cuts Bush advisers privately suggest won't free up nearly enough money to fund their missile defense proposals, much less pay for their modernization plans. And there's only so much fat they can cut before they start bleeding the military's capacity to fulfill America's global commitments. Absent a substantial hike in defense spending, something has to give. Otherwise, America will have purchased an opportunity to wield its power undeterred at the expense of its actual capacity to do so. Which, needless to say, undermines the entire strategic rationale for missile defense.

Does Bush understand any of this? Probably not. But his advisers certainly do. They've spent years arguing that missile defense should respond to strategic imperatives, not political ones. Yet if they deploy a system whose purpose is to beat the clock rather than the missile threat, they will have done exactly what they've argued against for so long. The result will be a defense that encourages retrenchment while offering no security to our allies and very little to us. And, leftist critiques notwithstanding, that could be worse than none at all. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Waiting and Changing

Opening shots of films often make promises, and almost equally often those promises are broken. A fine first shot is thus almost as much a caution as an enticement. One of the many rewards in **The Widow of Saint-Pierre** (Lions Gate) is that the promise of its beautiful opening is beautifully kept.

We see a long and lofty room with several large windows, a room almost bare of furniture. At the farthest window a young woman in mid-nineteenth-century dress is looking out. It's a moment in Corot. On the soundtrack she tells us—in French (subtitled, of course)—that the story we are about to see is based on real events. But nothing in the film is more real than the fulfillment of this opening, the pathos for the eye that leads to what will come.

The year is 1849, the principal setting is Saint-Pierre, a small island off the coast of Newfoundland. At the time it was a French colony. (Now it is a department of France.) At first there is fog, thick and accustomed, while low strings in the film score intensify it. Out of this fog emerge fisherfolk, stolid, sturdy, past complaint about their circumstances. The fishermen go to a tavern. Two of them get drunk and begin a trivial quarrel about a third man. They row over to a smaller island where that man lives and in a pointless altercation murder him.

The local court sentences one of the men to prison, but he is accidentally killed while being transported. The other man, Neel Auguste, has been sentenced to death—in the usual French way, the guillotine. There is one difficulty: Saint-Pierre has no guillotine. (The old French slang for "guillotine" is "widow"; hence the title of the film.) Letters are dispatched, but it will be eight months until a widow arrives. Thus in this small community a condemned man must be detained while the means of executing him is procured.

The commander of the island garrison, a captain, is responsible for the imprisonment and the care of Auguste. Since the prisoner has nothing to do but lie in his cell, the captain's wife, known as Madame La, asks her husband for Auguste's help in starting a garden and building a hothouse. The captain agrees. Auguste helps her and does other chores for Madame La. The weeks gradually disclose the man he is, the full sentient being under the drunk who committed the murder.

Any suspicion we may have that this story is going to turn into a triangle is very soon shown to be merely our vulgarity. Auguste does, in the course of time, have an affair with a woman he once knew; he impregnates her and is, by the captain's order, allowed to marry her. But among the captain and Madame La and Auguste a transaction occurs that can only be called a spiritual fusion. The captain and his wife become almost painfully aware of the humanity within the man they are holding for his death. At one point Madame La even arranges for Auguste to take a small boat laden with food and to row—he is strong—across the bay to Canada and escape. Auguste starts. But after a while he reappears in Saint-Pierre and returns to his cell because he doesn't want to get his benefactors in trouble.

But the trouble comes. (With an ironic sting. The ship bearing the guillotine arrives in Saint-Pierre harbor with its rudder broken, and it has to be towed in. Auguste volunteers for the rowing crew because he can earn some money for his pregnant wife.) The guillotine is erected; an executioner is found—not without difficulty, because an executioner automatically becomes a pariah. At the last, the captain, chiefly out of love for his wife and a wish to stand with her in her compassion, opposes the execution. But the execution occurs. The captain is sent back to France on charges of sedition and meets a military fate. (This fate returns us to the opening shot.)

All the while this film is running before us, a fragrance of great literature seems to fill the air. In its paradox, its character unfoldings, its poignancy, its brutalization of reason by the rotes of society, there are hints of Hugo and Hardy and Dostoevsky and Chekhov, all wizards of those themes. This phenomenon is far from a literary bondage in the film: it is the approach of this film to something like the evocations of great writing—transformations brought about by new definings of love, not by will. The screenplay by Claude Faraldo supports this view: it uses the means of cinema, sheer cinema, to open apertures of spirit.

This, of course, means that Faraldo provided opportunities for the director, the cinematographer, and the cast to achieve these things. The director was Patrice Leconte, whose previous films, such as *Monsieur Hire* and *The Hairdresser's Husband* and *Ridicule*, were made with the sort of neat competence that is like a door slammed on growth. Here Leconte bursts through—to an ache of size, deploying space in the evocation of spirit. Scene after scene is unrolled before us in a manner that suggests a vow to truth, a kind of beneficial tension, a quiet fervor that lifts the whole experience far past the adventures in the narrative.

The cinematographer was Eduardo Serra, who has worked with Leconte before and who also did *The Wings of the Dove*. Here the seasons were at his disposal (a lone horseman riding across a snowy field) and textures were manifold (stone cottages, luxe gubernatorial interiors), and Serra made the most of them in two ways. It is as if he and Leconte had agreed that the visual beauty of the film would serve as contrast to the cruelty of the people within it, and it would also symbolize the purity, the high air, the oceanic swell of exaltation that enfold the captain and Madame La, and that in an odd way also reconcile Auguste. The fog of the opening has dissolved.

As for the cast, all the minor roles are richly cast, especially Michel Duchaussoy as the governor and Philippe Magnan as the judge. The three principals are even better. Auguste is played by Emir Kusturica, the well-known Yugoslav director (*Time of the Gypsies*) who here makes his acting debut. He endows the role with a blend of silent animal strength and grim resignation. Madame La is Juliette Binoche, whose recent mistakes include the saccharine *Chocolat* and an ill-advised Broadway appearance in Pinter's *Betrayal*, but in this role, she gives us a woman raised beyond her knowledge of herself by a moral responsibility she didn't know she could accept. The captain is Daniel Auteuil, and that sentence, with the role's name changed, is becoming a complete statement. With Auteuil, we know we are going to see reality plumbed, the sort of verity that makes most realistic film acting look facile.

One minor point. When he is in uniform, which is most of the time, Auteuil never wears his cap, which the captain must have known is a breach of regulations. An actor's quirk, I suppose. Well, if it's such an excellent actor.... ■

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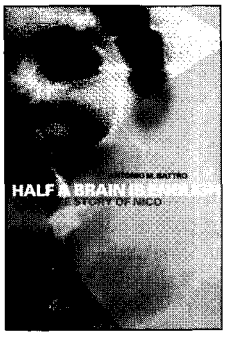

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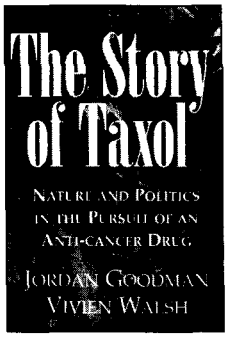

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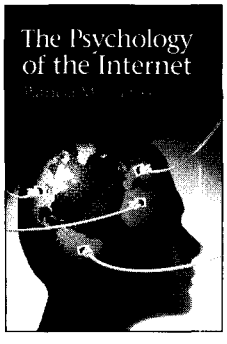

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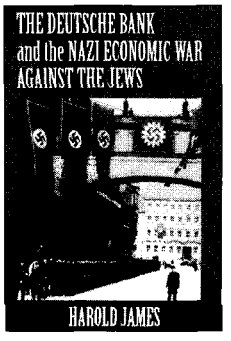

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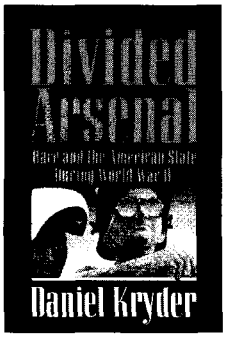

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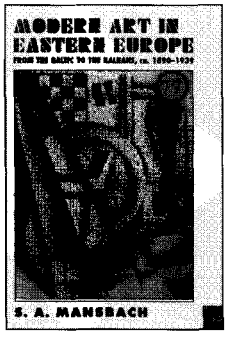

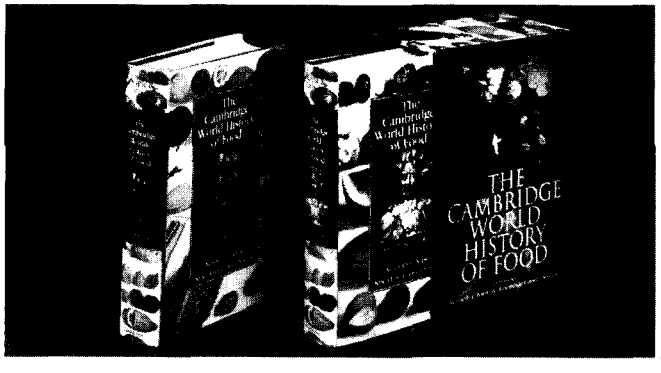

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Jed Perl on Art

Exit Balthus

BALTHUS, WHO DIED at his home in Switzerland on February 18, was the last great twentieth-century creator, a man whose achievements will prove as inexhaustible as those of Eliot or Stravinsky or Balanchine or Bonnard. His death, coming a few weeks short of his ninety-third birthday, cannot be said to have been unexpected. But in the past quarter of a century Balthus produced such a stream of masterworks, right up to the canvas of a girl asleep in a moonlit landscape completed last year and exhibited at the National Gallery in London over the summer, that he leaves many artists and museumgoers feeling bereft.

"The current of his feeling failed," Auden wrote in 1939 about the death of Yeats; "he became his admirers." That is now true of Balthus; but the transition is complicated by one's suspicion that, in spite of Balthus's enormous reputation, his admirers may still be outnumbered by his detractors. Balthus's vision, at once opulently theatrical and intellectually severe, has not always found easy acceptance. While some museumgoers are made uncomfortable by the sexual nature of certain of his subjects, there is another part of the audience that recoils almost instinctively from his vision of art as a realm unto itself, as a kingdom with its own law and logic, its own accidents and revelations. Despite the high prices that his paintings command, and the many retrospectives devoted to his work, and all the international honors that came his way, Balthus remains an anomalous figure.

There is no end to the questions that Balthus's complex and paradoxical achievements raise. What does it mean, some have wondered on first encountering his canvases, when a painter insists on working from life in a century widely regarded as the age of abstract art? Others, getting to know the work better, have found themselves grappling with Balthus's stylistic pluralism, with his willingness and even his eagerness to paint in many different ways and to master everything from a fine-grained naturalism to a bold, Asian-influenced kind of simplification. And what, many have asked, often with undisguised hostility, does Balthus really mean to say when, time and again, he paints very young, often scantily clad women?

Each of these questions points toward a larger question, for all of Balthus's choices—to paint from direct observation, to paint young women, to paint in several different styles—tell us something about how he believed that art relates to life. The variety of modes and manners in which Balthus worked suggests that he saw art as kaleidoscopic in its relationship with nature. To paint the world in a particular way was to hold the kaleidoscope in a certain position, to allow painting to be a certain kind of abstraction of reality. If you accept this proposition, then there is no longer a paradox involved in being a representational painter in an age of abstract art, for representation is itself an abstraction, an idealization that helps us to make sense of experience. As for Balthus's young women, they are liberated by the very abstractness of the work of art. They are only victims to those who cannot imagine that a work of art has a complex internal dynamic that becomes *their* life.

The questions that Balthus raises are very old ones, but then Balthus always looked backward and forward, always mixed the old and the new. His own life had a time-warp quality, a then-becomes-now quality, and this was not only because he was born on leap day in 1908 and could thus claim, even when he was in his nineties, to be a man in his twenties. His parents, Erich and Baladine Klossowski, were figures of some consequence in the arts—both were painters, and his father was a stage designer and the author of a widely admired study of Daumier; and through them and their friends Balthus gained a kind of familial connection with the art-for-art's-sake ethos of the fin-de-siècle. In the years when Balthus was growing up in Paris and Switzerland, his parents knew some of the great artistic figures of the age. Gide and Rilke, two votaries of the late-nineteenth-century religion of art, acted as mentors to Balthus and his brother, the writer Pierre Klossowski.

Although Balthus and his family knew times of real financial hardship in the 1920s, there was a grandeur to those early years that can leave us rubbing our eyes in amazement. Bonnard was among the people who commented favorably on Balthus's earliest artistic efforts. After her separation from Erich, Baladine had an affair with Rilke. She was instrumental in finding him the home in Switzerland where he finished the *Duino Elegies*; his letters to her (he called her Merline) are famous. When Balthus was all of thirteen, Rilke helped him to publish *Mitsou*, an album of drawings about the life of a cat, and he persuaded the boy that he should be known to the world by this nickname rather than by his real name, Balthasar Klossowski. Both Rilke and Gide gave Balthus and his brother practical assistance so that they could continue their studies. Rilke's poem "Narcisse," written in 1925, is dedicated to Balthus.

With Balthus's death we have lost somebody whom, by the logic of chronology and normal life spans, we never really had any right to expect: a living link to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the religion of art was not a worn-out pose but a vibrant challenge. What is miraculous about Balthus is that he embraced the old challenge but he never treated it sentimentally. He was always moving on, with one eye trained on the past. It was his admirers who became sentimental about his work, who used his old triumphs to criticize his new ones.

Many museumgoers never forgave Balthus for abandoning the hard-boiled Biedermeier style with which he came to prominence in the 1930s and created his superb illustrations for *Wuthering Heights*. Those who regard *Le Passage du Commerce Saint-André* (1952–54) as the definitive view of a somber existentialist Paris are often uncomfortable with the full-out hedonism of the many pastel-hued interiors and landscapes that he painted a few years later, when he was living in a ramshackle Burgundian château. Those who esteem Balthus's daring reconsiderations of Giotto and the Sienese trecento—which date from the 1960s and 1970s, after André Malraux had chosen him to be the director of the French Academy in Rome—may be hard put to grasp the vehemently anti-Italianate simplifications in the two figures, inspired by classical Japanese paintings, that were designed as homages to Setsuko, his second wife and now his widow, and that constitute the most significant European response to Asian art since Van Gogh.

In recent decades Balthus used the muted richness of his color to build forms that have a magical density and bring to mind passages in the very greatest figure paintings of Giorgione, Titian, and Correggio. And yet the long cycle of canvases of a girl holding a toy bird or a mirror to entertain a cat has never quite caught on with the public; many people seem to recoil from this embarrassment of riches. Could it be that Balthus's hard-won, go-it-alone freedom is experienced as an affront in an art world dominated by brand-name

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styles? Two exhibitions of Balthus drawings, mounted in New York in the past several years, received barely a mention in the press, and the appearance of two new paintings in London last summer was regarded by many sophisticated people as almost a non-event. I am left wondering if the audience for contemporary art has completely lost its mind; this is another one of the questions that Balthus has left for us to answer.

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Balthus, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," 1998–2000

Balthus was often referred to as a reclusive man, but if the obligation of a painter is to produce something that others can see, then he was no recluse. Although most of his recent canvases have not been exhibited in the United States, for decades Balthus showed all his new work at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, and, while he never visited the United States, he did have a special bond with the city, where he had his first retrospective, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1956. For many people few gallerygoing experiences have been more remarkable than the exhibition at Pierre Matisse in 1977, when the Roman and Japanese figures were first exhibited alongside the magnificent *Card Players* (1966–73).

One gathers that in conversation Balthus did not hesitate to express his dismay at a public that so insistently misunderstood his intentions, but his lifelong involvement with exhibitions devoted to his work suggests that he also longed for a public, and knew that the controversies that swirled around his work could have no final resolution. Since his imagery was so very personal—and perhaps inexplicable even to its maker—there was never going to be a way to square the paintings with some general public sentiment. The work will continue to provoke troubles, questions, wonderment. This is as it should be.

As for all the questions that have been raised about how Balthus chose to lead his life, they are not as interesting as many people seem to think. Balthus was criticized for insisting that he be called the "Count de Rola," a title to which he probably had no claim. Objections were raised to his taste for high society, to his infatuation with impossibly grand living arrangements, to sexual liaisons that seem to have been neither as numerous nor as untoward as the investigators and the gossips hoped. Recently much has been made of Balthus's insistence that his undeniably Jewish mother was not Jewish. Balthus was lying, and that was ugly, but then anybody who expected him to be an especially good man was bound to be disappointed. As Auden said of Yeats: "You were silly like us; your gift survived it all."

We must not forget that Balthus, like his father before him, was in certain respects a man of the theater. He was movie-star handsome, with dark hair and chiseled features in which photographers such as Man Ray, Cecil Beaton, and Irving Penn saw an icon of Parisian elegance. Penn made him seem like a great comedian, too. Balthus was friends with Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault (there were physical resemblances among the three men); he collaborated on theatrical productions with both Artaud and Barrault; he designed a production of *Così fan tutte* for Aix-en-Provence in 1950.

For Balthus, the theater with its proscenium stage was, as it has been for many artists since the Renaissance, a symbol of the tangled relations of art and life, which we honor by remembering that certain lines cannot be crossed. The appearances that Balthus made as an actor in his own paintings are all informed by his transcendent theatrical instincts. There are several straightforward self-portraits; and he is Heathcliff in his *Wuthering Heights*; and he takes a turn in drag as the music teacher in *The Guitar Lesson* (1934), a canvas of a rape that he may have later regretted.

As the years went by, Balthus's appearances in his paintings became more circumspect. In the 1950s, in *Le Passage du Commerce Saint-André*, Balthus walks away from us into the Parisian dusk, a baguette in his right hand. Thirty years later, in *The Painter and His Model*, he turns away from both the model and the viewer as he draws a curtain to reveal the daylight that is his essential medium. And in the nightmarish *Large Composition with Raven*, completed in 1986, he is again seen from the back, now as a tiny naked figure carrying an enormous cage. For half a century Balthus was walking away, turning away, shrinking away. He was saying that he wanted to give his work to the world and then vanish. And now he has. ■

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The great, unknown Ferruccio Busoni.

The Man Who Knew Too Much

By JEREMY EICHLER

SOME MUSICIANS SEEM forever fated to wander the corridors of history's purgatory—too important to be forgotten by everyone, too obscure to be remembered by most. Ferruccio Busoni is perhaps the twentieth century's greatest example. He came of age in what Stefan Zweig called "the world of yesterday." He heard Brahms play piano, and he performed for Liszt. But by the end of his life he had witnessed the birth of the modern—indeed, he anticipated in his own work many of the major directions that music would take in the next seventy-five years.

Since his death in 1924, rumors about Busoni's pianism have persisted. Some have said that he could play louder and faster than anyone alive, and that his Liszt interpretations had "chords like cast bronze." His repertoire was sprawlingly large, partly because his laser-like intellect bore quickly to the flaws of every composer, even the great masters, leaving him no choice but to move on to the next promise of genius. He filled his writings with original ideas and startling aphorisms, often couched in a gauzy mysticism. He wrote of distant, vibrating worlds of perfected sound. To approach these worlds, he exhorted subsequent generations of composers to "Rise up!" with a Nietzschean will to power, and to create new laws that would liberate their art from its bondage. "Music is born free," he declared in 1907, in his *Outline of a New Aesthetic of Music*, "and to win freedom is its destiny."

As a composer, Busoni's own music could not possibly live up to the loftiness of his ideals. He left behind a substantial catalogue of works—masterpieces and flops; but his indisputable magnum opus was the opera *Doktor Faust*, which he began in 1916 and which remained unfinished at his death. Even in its incompletion, the piece represents a remarkable culmination of Busoni's experimental musical spirit and his mysticism. Like its creator, the opera has spent decades prowling around the margins of the repertory, catching nods of grudging respect for its sheer synthetic brilliance, but little more than that. The work's size, scope, and technical demands prevent it from being much heard or much seen. These days, alas, Busoni's name is mostly just glanced at with curiosity on the right side of a hyphen: as in "Bach-Busoni," his piano transcriptions of Bach's music that are still the staples of recitals.

But we must think twice before consigning Busoni's name to the dustbin of history. His music may in fact be catching up with his myth. A winning recording last year of *Doktor Faust*, together with the announcement that the Metropolitan Opera would stage its first production of the opera, promised to put Busoni firmly back on the map. That production recently closed after only a mild success; but there are reasons to believe that interest in Busoni's music will continue to grow as we gain distance from the twentieth century and continue sorting through the rubble from its failed laboratories, its maverick schools, its militant manifestos. Busoni was too variegated a thinker to cast his lot with a movement, but he did espouse an idea, a remarkably prescient idea, that he called Young Classicality. He defined it as "the mastery, the sifting and the turning to account of all the gains of previous experiments and their inclusion in strong beautiful forms." It was supposed to guide the music of the future. It sounds an awful lot like what composers are trying to do today.

FERRUCCIO BENVENUTO BUSONI was born in the small town of Empoli, in Tuscany, in 1866. His father was an Italian clarinetist and his mother was a German pianist, but neither proved to be a particularly good teacher. After finishing his studies in Vienna and Graz, Busoni eventually held posts at conservatories in Moscow and Boston, but Berlin would become his home. From an early age, he was hailed as a prodigy at the keyboard, but he always regarded himself first and foremost as a composer. He was writing music when he was seven. It was in his early thirties that he began to compose mature scores such as his Violin Concerto, a congenial piece with a high-wire solo line that takes a few surprising turns and sounds in certain places like Beethoven on amphetamines. Most of the time though, the concerto hews to a classical sense of refinement and style.

With his Piano Concerto, begun four years later in 1901, Busoni abandoned any sense of politesse and loudly gave notice of arrival. This frighteningly overwrought piece has five movements, lasts about seventy-five minutes, and concludes with an offstage male chorus sending out mystical hosannas to "the Power Eternal." It is an impressive catalogue of ambient bric-a-brac and late-Romantic bombast. In some passages it borders on kitsch, and in other passages it crosses the border. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the piece is that its bombast is generally assigned to the orchestra and not to the soloist. The piano line is notable for its restraint—an early sign of Busoni's distaste for sentimentalist display at the keyboard.

As Antony Beaumont points out in his indispensable study on the composer, the concerto's excesses were also of a piece with its time. This was an age of grandiosity in music, of Mahler's symphonies and Strauss's symphonic poems. The profligacy of the Piano Concerto illustrates, if nothing else, the composer's brazen confidence that people would listen. And listen they did at its premiere in 1904. One critic described the experience as being "submerged in a flood of cacophony." He was not entirely incorrect; but Busoni took the reviews in stride. His exceptionally busy mind was already elsewhere.

He had begun a fascinating correspondence with Schoenberg, who was only eight years his junior. Over the next decade, in perfervid volleys between Vienna, where Schoenberg held court, and Berlin, where Busoni was emerging as a leader of the avant-garde, the two men fiercely debated the future directions of their art. Both composers had independently arrived at the same conclusion: that the strict ordering of notes, chords, and keys that constituted the tonal system was a barrier that needed to be removed for music to move forward. Schoenberg was by far the more zealous in putting these heretical beliefs into practice.

He sent Busoni copies of his newly minted Opus 11 pieces, three concise Molotov cocktails for solo piano in which he first began assaulting the barricades of tonality. Schoenberg coveted Busoni's approval, which Busoni granted him only in moderation. He did not balk at the radical nature of Schoenberg's harmony (he had himself anticipated it, at least conceptually), but he took issue with the compactness of the style, writing in the summer of 1910 that "laconicism too becomes just another mannerism." Busoni

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thought that the listening ear needed more time to understand and to assimilate the changes in sea level that such works represented. He went as far as to rearrange Schoenberg's pieces in his own transcriptions—something that irked Schoenberg to no end.

But it is in a broader sense that Busoni's criticisms of Schoenberg illustrated something profound about himself. In that same letter of 1910, perhaps the most telling in their entire correspondence, Busoni singled out the starkness and the stridency of Schoenberg's new accomplishment. He wrote: "The 'asceticism' ... of the piano writing seems to me a pointless avoidance of foregone achievements. You are proposing a new value in place of an earlier one, instead of adding the new one to the old. You will become *different* and not *richer*." With these three sentences, Busoni anticipated a charge that came to be leveled at the next seven decades of modern music: that the break with the past would become too complete, the reign of serialism too tyrannical. Many would say Busoni was right about his colleague's rebellion. Like a liberation movement in a third world country, Schoenberg's revolt would end up replacing one dictatorship with another.

This was the fundamental difference between Busoni and Schoenberg, both in philosophy and in practice. In freeing music from the forces that bound it, Schoenberg saw no choice but to raze the old cathedrals to the ground. Busoni, in contrast, took the long view, and did not need to destroy in order to build, and saw value for the future in all the accumulations of the past. He did not agree that history stood in the way of art. Subsequent generations, he wrote, would need to climb "on the shoulders of the past" to take music to its future.

Busoni's ability to engage with Schoenberg's innovations while maintaining a critical distance from them was admirable, and for most of his adult life he showed the same skill for tolerating the chaff for the sake of the wheat. He retained a thoughtful skepticism towards the currents of thought that swept through fin-de-siècle and prewar Europe—aestheticism, occultism, futurism—even as his music showed signs of their sway. One telling example came in 1912, when Busoni saw an exhibit of futurist art in London. The pictures were "thrilling" and "great," he wrote in a letter to his wife, Gerda. "Unfortunately," he concluded with an almost audible sigh, "I can see that these people are already becoming old-fashioned."

Busoni gave voice to his own aesthetic vision in a series of essays and articles, the most famous of which is his *Outline of a New Aesthetic of Music*—a small pamphlet that is one of the more brilliant, prophetic, and strange pieces of writing about music to come out of that overheated period. In it Busoni struggled to define his notion of "absolute music"—an idealized, celestial music of which only glimpses have been gained in works by Bach and Beethoven, but which more often is occluded by our earthly attention to musical laws and forms. These laws, he wrote, are designed for an adult art, while music is still a child. And yet, he continued,

> Young as it is, this child, we already recognize that it possesses one radiant attribute which signalizes it beyond all its elder sisters. And the lawgivers will not see this marvelous attribute lest their own law should be thrown to the winds. This child—*floats on air!* It touches not the earth with its feet.... Its material is transparent. It is sonorous air. It is almost Nature herself. It is—free.

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Ferruccio Busoni, 1921

The true creative artist, he declared, does not follow the received laws, he creates new ones. Busoni went on to propose new divisions of scales into microtones, and even suggested a new method for notating them. And in case there had been any doubt about which philosopher had been on his mind, Busoni concluded by throwing in an extended quotation from *Beyond Good and Evil*.

But if in his writing he preached of liberation from forms, his compositions remained more conventional than one might imagine. If you were to read the essays alone, and then listen to your first Busoni recording, you might expect the speakers to quake in waves of heterodox, idiosyncratic sound. This is usually not the case. Most of Busoni's works are more quietly original. His *Elegies* for piano glow softly with free-floating polychrome chords, set off by elegant curlicues of melody. His *Fantasia contrappuntistica*, based on Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*, is an immaculately crafted set of fugues and variations that feel, at their best, like an Escher painting suspended in a hall of mirrors.

His respect for tradition notwithstanding, Busoni was eager to dip his toes into the waters of harmonic ambiguity. His most experimental music was his fantastical Second Sonatina for piano and his chillingly opaque *Nocturne Symphonique* for orchestra. When Busoni premiered the former in a recital in 1913, the crowd became unruly; and it appears that the naysayers in the audience came to blows with none other than F. T. Marinetti, the founder of the Futurist movement, who, as a Busoni fan, was also in attendance. Recalling the event in a letter that same day, Busoni was deeply satisfied.

But the composer was too measured in his radicalism to follow the path of his junior colleague from Vienna. While Schoenberg kept driving toward his eventual discovery of the twelve-tone method, Busoni veered off in a different direction. After the *Nocturne Symphonique*, he turned his attention to writing works based on the music of the American Indians, his *Red Indian Fantasy* for piano and orchestra and *Red Indian Diary* for piano. (In their ancient melodies, Busoni heard echoes of the absolute, universal music that he so idealized.) What's more, the composer saw something disingenu-

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ous about Schoenberg's project and his dismissive attitude of all that came before him. It is Schoenberg and his disciples of whom the reader thinks when, toward the end of his life, Busoni observes that "the newcomers deceive themselves, too, in thinking they can break, or have broken, with all their predecessors. This is not the case, in spite of their unshakable conviction, for every child has a mother to whom it is still attached by the navel even after birth."

THE IDEA OF composing a Faust opera based not on Goethe's masterpiece but on the sixteenth-century puppet play took hold of Busoni as early as 1910. He drafted the first half of the libretto that same year in a fit of inspiration, and spent the remaining fourteen years of his life obsessively trying to flesh out its music. It came with him to America, where he toured as a pianist; to Zurich, where he anxiously weathered the storm of World War I; and back with him to Berlin, where he would live out the remainder of his years. Busoni died without having completed his masterpiece, and what was left unfinished was deeply suggestive in what it lacked.

What Busoni did compose is one of the most high-mindedly spiritual operas of the century, deeply personal and yet at the same time forbiddingly austere. Indeed, listening to *Doktor Faust*—its impeccable polyphony, its chiseled vocal lines, its tightrope walk with tonality—one cannot help but suspect that Busoni's musical ideals overshadowed his concerns with such petty things as drama and narrative. Characters are not developed, singers do not interact. The philosophical questions are not brought down to the level of the everyday. This is an opera that the director Peter Mussbach has aptly described as autistic. For this reason, it may never garner a groundswell of popular support. Nor, it seems, was that anywhere near Busoni's intention.

The story, as the composer imagined it, can be summarized as follows. Faust, the rector of a university, is visited by three students from Kraków, who deliver to him the mythical book *Clavis Astartis Magica*. Recognizing its powers, he grows ecstatic, summoning six servants of the devil, the last of which is Mephistopheles, with whom he signs the infamous pact. His powers of magic and sorcery established, Faust wreaks havoc, eventually seducing the duchess of Parma on her wedding day. Later Faust is sharing his adventures with a group of students when Mephistopheles brings news that the duchess is dead. He hands Faust the corpse of his infant child. It turns out to be only straw, and it ignites, and out of the flames there appears a vision of the ancient Helen, representing the ideal of perfection and beauty. Faust is initially tempted, then forswears the vision. He is later approached by the students from Kraków who seek the magic book, but Faust has destroyed it. The students announce that he will die at midnight. Faust is relieved, and approaches an old beggar woman. She turns out to be the duchess herself, and she hands back to Faust the corpse of his child. In one last act of magic, Faust invests the dead child with his spirit, and it rises back to life as Faust meets his own end.

Busoni once wrote that "a composer, a creator, brings to a single opera all that moves him, all that swims before his eyes, all that is within his powers to achieve: he is a musical Dante, a musical Divine Comedy." He could have easily been describing his own process, as his opera has a feeling of encompassing everything in Busoni's oeuvre but the kitchen sink. The impression, of course, is misleading, though the expansive score does notably make use of his *Nocturne Symphonique* as well as his Second Sonatina for piano. It was in a deeper sense, perhaps, that *Doktor Faust* was generated from Busoni's cumulative experiences. As many commentators have observed, the opera is semi-autobiographical. Faust, like Busoni, quests for truth, only to be frustrated by the inherent limitations of such a quest. Edward Dent, Busoni's biographer, suggests also the elegant parallel of Faust's magic: in the opera, Faust conjures apparitions of Solomon, Samson, and John the Baptist, each of whom looks like Faust, just as Busoni the pianist, Dent writes, is the "most miraculous of interpreters, yet always [presenting himself] in the vision of Bach, Mozart or Beethoven."

But the most striking parallel is with the vision of Helen, the ideal of beauty, who clearly represents Busoni's own notions of the eternal, absolute music. In the opera Faust rejects the vision, protesting that "mankind is not yet ripe enough for perfection," just as Busoni himself eschewed the notion that even the great masters revealed to us more than a glimpse of the infinite. It is also significant that at Busoni's death, two particular musical passages remained uncomposed. The first was the section that was to accompany the vision of Helen: not only did Busoni renounce the possibility of perfection, he could not even bring himself to compose the music for its contemplation. And the second unfinished section is the final scene, in which Faust, as Busoni did so often, pledges his spirit to the advances of future generations. Here the dying Faust sings the following words while alone on stage, holding the dead child:

> Go forward from the roots here so deeply embedded of my departing day to the joyous opening blossom of what you shall become.... What I built crooked you shall make straight, what I neglected you shall complete. Above the law then shall I stand, at once embracing all the ages, and unite myself with mankind forever. I Faust, one eternal will!

Except for the final grandiloquent flourish, the words might well have been Busoni's own valedictory to the composers who followed him. They were words whose pertinence to the very work at hand he could never have known when he first committed them to paper. After Busoni's death, in an irony that seems sadly appropriate, the task of completing his great opera fell to Philipp Jarnach, Busoni's student and assistant.

JUDGING *DOKTOR FAUST* has always been a complicated enterprise, since it is not like most other operas. The Met's production provoked some often-heard complaints: that the story is fragmentary, that the action is sparse, that there is too much music before anything happens on stage. These features of the work may indeed be counted among its shortcomings, but it is worth remarking also that they were intentional choices on the part of the composer. The gaps in the plot were spaces through which Busoni hoped to leave room for his music to breathe. The opera itself reflects his ideal that music should complete the action on stage. It should illuminate the internal states of the characters "as light helps the inspection of a picture," rather than duplicating what the audience already sees before them, as is the case in many of Wagner's operas. This difference in approach led to Busoni's comment that "Wagner on the stage is ... a composer for non-musicians, fundamentally untruthful and actually boring."

The fragmented nature of *Doktor Faust* was underscored by Mussbach, who directed this co-production with the Salzburg Festival, and essentially treated the opera as a series of visions and daydreams. There is a case to be made for such an interpretation, but it is in some ways facile. If Faust's trials are no more than dreams, than his anguish, too, is of his own making—and suddenly a profoundly contemplative opera is reduced to a series of tableaux based on one man's overheated imagination. Or, more darkly, the opera becomes the story of its protagonist's descent into insanity. Both readings are plausible, and visually evocative; but in the

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end they cheat the audience of the work's deep moral impact.

Still, Mussbach has carved some very arresting images out of Faust's "delusions." Faust's study is a barren room dissected by a pair of eerily suspended train tracks onto which rolls an open car carrying the magic book, which in this case is a large tombstone-like tablet. When Mephistopheles makes his entrance, he glides in effortlessly on the other set of tracks. He has neither horns nor a pitchfork, but is dressed in a suit, and later (more transgressively, and therefore less shockingly) in black leather. Faust dresses in modern clothes as well, parading through much of the opera in a trench coat, presumably to mark him as an everyman.

The train tracks were a nice touch—a reference to the railroads that would shuttle evil across Germany in the decades following Busoni's death?—but other high-concept moments may have gone a bit over the top. The final scene of the opera was framed by two gigantic industrial-size fans, first blowing snow around the dimly lit stage, then eventually shutting down and lying bizarrely dormant. *Doktor Faust*, it should be recalled, is an opera with plenty of enigma and darkness of its own. It is not exactly lacking in esotericism. To enshroud such a work with yet more layers of coded signs and symbols is to overburden it, even for the most forgiving audiences. This may account for the chorus of boos that greeted Mussbach as he took his bow.

The orchestra was led by the French conductor Philippe Auguin, who deserves credit for stepping in on short notice after James Levine withdrew; but Auguin did not bring much clarity to this notoriously difficult score, and the playing on opening night was unflatteringly muddy and imprecise. Thomas Hampson struggled valiantly with the role of Faust, bringing a heroic energy to a role that might easily slip into caricature. He showed signs of vocal strain, but at the final performance three weeks later he and the orchestra were sounding much improved. So was the tenor Robert Brubaker, who was satisfyingly serpentine as Mephistopheles, though his voice stumbled slightly on opening night.

For those who missed this production, or who would like a closer hearing of this dense and elusive work, Erato has released a fine new recording with Kent Nagano conducting the National Opera of Lyon Orchestra and Choir. Dietrich Henschel is Faust, Kim Begley is Mephistopheles, and Eva Jenis is the Duchess of Parma. The performance has a taut urgency to it, and it is no doubt cleaner than any live production could ever be. Nagano's fluency with this music is in most cases unimpeachable, though he makes a few seemingly careless mistakes, such as cutting short rests in the score. This would be of little consequence if not for Busoni's own conviction about silence in music, which in his view "leaves wider scope for divination than the more determinate, but therefore less elastic, sound." The best feature of the new recording, and its primary advantage over its only competitor—a slightly abridged Deutsche Grammophon version from 1969, with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as Faust—is that Nagano has recorded both Jarnach's completion of the score as well as a more modern alternative by Beaumont, based on sketches by Busoni. Listeners have differed on which ending is better—I am partial to Beaumont's, for its organic cohesion with the larger work—but the new recording allows you to program either ending into your CD player and judge for yourself.

BUSONI WAS THE first significant composer to wrestle with the problem of inheriting all the styles. In this sense, he was one of us. He felt keenly the weight of history, the tyranny of all the richness that preceded him. His writing on music, so full of elaborate constructs that sought to eliminate the categories of old and new, past and future, reflected the tense musings of an oscilloscopic mind. He was an artist besieged by the multiplicity of options. His problem was very much the problem of the composers of our time: how to forge a unique style when everything seems available.

Rather than turning away from all the inheritances and reaching inwards, Busoni was constantly grasping outwards, towards new influences, new materials. He was forever writing transcriptions of other people's work. Sometimes these transcriptions would be direct transfers across instruments; sometimes they were complex reworkings and reinventions. Busoni's syncretism extended even to himself: he would often incorporate his past compositions into new projects, as in *Doktor Faust*, for which, Beaumont tells us, the composer drew from twenty-three of his own works. One struggles to discern where the transcriptions end and Busoni begins. (Or, more precisely, begins again.)

Other composers, of course, struggled with the diversity of styles. Stravinsky showed a similar if not wider diversity; but the difference between Stravinsky and Busoni is significant. Stravinsky had defined periods in his evolution, stages of development. With Busoni, one gets the impression that all the periods existed simultaneously in his overcrowded head. In this sense, Busoni's case should sound

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a note of caution for our time. He was an apostle of inclusion; but it may be that the beginning of aesthetic wisdom, at this notoriously late date, is a principle of exclusion. To be one thing, the contemporary artist must agree not to be another thing. He does not need to use everything he has in everything he does.

So was Busoni the first postmodern? He certainly managed to live cozily with contradiction; and he mixed and matched like a present-day composer who has learned that there are no rules. And yet at the same time he possessed an anxious and intensely philosophical nineteenth-century earnestness. He did not give up on the idea of progress or on the idea of truth. He was a historicist who believed in more than history. In his eclectic music one still hears the promptings of inner necessity. Busoni lived through a period when music was casting off its moorings and drifting free, but it was a freedom that he could neither fully endorse nor fully ignore, and one of his responses to it was to call for order in music, for the creation of "something durable again." Like his Faust, a dazed inventor wandering through a scorched artistic landscape, Busoni would not fulfill his quest, but he established at least the legitimacy of such a quest, and for this reason we have much to learn from his restless, beautiful, premonitory music. ■

A Man Without Qualities

By OMER BARTOV

Hitler, 1936–45: Nemesis by Ian Kershaw

(W.W. Norton, 1,115 pp., $35)

I.

FEW HISTORICAL FIGURES can lay claim to more popularity among historians (and their readers) than the greatest mass murderer of modern times. The facts about Adolf Hitler are by now largely known. And yet we keep coming back to the same old question: how is it that within a few years this man of obscure origins and dubious credentials became the absolute ruler of a powerful and civilized European nation, conquered vast tracts of territory, murdered millions of human beings, and came within a hair's breadth of expanding his evil empire over much of the rest of the world? What lay behind the rise and the fall of a person whose genius was firmly rooted in utter wickedness; whose greatness, such as it was, came with generous doses of mediocrity; and whose continuing fascination for subsequent generations—obviously related to his almost successful bid to change the order of things through unprecedented destruction—cannot be easily reconciled with the boring, petit-bourgeois private life of this self-centered, opinionated, semi-educated, lazy, and hypochondriacal man? How did he win over the masses, the old elites, the intellectuals, the soldiers? Was he a "man of the people" or a foreign usurper? Did he represent the worst in German society, culture, and politics, or did he bring out the best in that nation's traditions and then distort it into unrecognizable horror? And how is it that his death seemed almost instantaneously to undo the spell that he had cast over Germany, transforming him from the unavoidable center of the nation into a memory everyone strove to repress?

Considering Hitler's tremendous impact on the twentieth century, it is tempting to think of him as the man of the century. But the notion would degrade us all, because his legacy was primarily one of annihilation, inhumanity, and hatred. Having murdered millions of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and Russians, he also caused the destruction and the division of Germany and the emergence of Communist dictatorships throughout Eastern Europe. His greatness, then, must be measured on the scale of evil; and it is from this perspective that we may conclude that Hitler had few peers, even in an epoch densely populated with monsters. This is "greatness" of the most repulsive form. Yet more than fifty years after the Holocaust, few things sell better than the Nazis, with thousands of new books published every year. And with the appearance of a biography—by far the most popular genre of history—the combination of the morbid attractions of Nazism and the irrepressible fascination with its Führer is almost unbeatable.

Written in a time that did not know Hitler, Stalin, or Mao, Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* tried to define the makings of "great men." For the nineteenth century, the outstanding example of an ambiguous hero was Napoleon Bonaparte, whose undeniable genius and extraordinary impact on history could not obscure his tyrannical and destructive predilections. Though he brought France its greatest moment of glory, he also betrayed the Revolution and sapped the energies of the nation to the core. But would Carlyle have included Hitler in his pantheon of heroes? Worshiped by millions of Germans, Hitler was seen by others as the embodiment of Satan. This was how Thomas Mann understood the phenomenon of evil genius in *Doctor Faustus*, written in exile from the land that preferred Horst Wessel to Franz Schubert. Satan, of course, is always heroic in the scale of his destructive capacity and in the depth of his evil schemes. Yet this is the dark side of greatness—its antimatter, so to speak. Can it reside in the same space allotted to the "good" heroes whom we associate with virtue, with nobility of mind and spirit? Or must there be a special pantheon for the "negative" heroes of our time? Would we then not face the danger that this new temple of horrors would have larger exhibits and far better ticket sales than the halls dedicated to a more conventional and admirable greatness?

DESPITE THE TORRENTS of words that have been dedicated to him, there are very few truly important biographies of Hitler. The earliest account of Hitler's rise to power, published in 1944, was written by Konrad Heiden, whose remarkable insights owed a great deal to his intimate knowledge of German society in the aftermath of World War I. His biography ends with Hitler's bloody purge of his own Stormtroops in 1934, the same year that the author left Germany. Heiden recognized early on that Hitler was "both terrible and banal." In setting himself the task of explaining "what sort of people were they who were capable of committing the crimes here described; and (even more urgently) what

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sort of people were capable of submitting to them," Heiden focused on the relationship between Hitler's charismatic promise and the needs of the German people. Hitler, he wrote,

> was able to enslave his own people because he seemed to give them something that even the traditional religions could no longer provide; the belief in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowness of self-interest. The real degradation began when people realized that the Devil was preferable to the emptiness of an existence which lacked a larger significance.

Heiden's Hitler was the redeemer turned diabolical, the God who kept his following even after his demonic face was unmasked. This transformation was inherent in Hitler's interaction with the world, for, as Heiden notes, he had an uncanny ability to metamorphose himself from a "timid man with contracted shoulders" into a "thundering demon," in personal conversation or before an audience of half a million. This, in Heiden's view, was the core of the phenomenon: "The magic power of this image of greatness emanating from human nullity greatly appealed to the German people after the [First] World War, when this people, oppressed by their own nullity, longed for greatness."

This was not strictly a German susceptibility. An even "deeper and more decisive explanation of Hitler's effect is the soul state of modern man, who, in his pettiness, loneliness, and lack of faith, longs for community, conviction, and greatness." It is precisely the perception of "greatness emerging from a creature who as a man is smaller than you or I" that "makes Hitler an experience for millions." Consequently, the presumed "riddle" of Hitler, that "sharp division of his personality—colorless on the one hand, dazzling on the other," was at the core of his appeal.

JOACHIM FEST, THE conservative journalist and historian, pondered the question of "Hitler and historical greatness" in his important biography, which appeared in 1973. While it is true that Hitler "made much more history than many others," Fest remarks, "at the same time history made him, to an altogether extraordinary degree." For Fest, Hitler was finally an "unperson" whose "peculiar greatness is essentially linked to the quality of excess. It was a tremendous eruption of energy that shattered all existing standards." Hitler never tired of reminding his listeners that he was just like them, a "poor devil" who came from nothing but was destined to rule over the world.

Indeed, Fest cannot help being impressed by Hitler's ability to create an entire universe from nothing. Here was a man who "to a virtually unprecedented degree ... created everything out of himself and was himself everything at once: his own teacher, organizer of a party and author of its ideology, tactician and demagogic savior, leader, statesman, and for a decade the 'axis' of the world." This ability to project himself outward begs the question of "whether greatness can be associated with a hollow individuality." After all, Hitler's "life would hardly deserve the telling if it were not that extrapersonal tendencies or conditions came to light in it; his biography is essentially part of the biography of the age."

Can such an "unperson" be great? According to Fest, the "phenomenon of Hitler demonstrates ... that historical greatness can be linked with paltriness on the part of the individual concerned." To be sure, at times Hitler's personality "seemed disintegrated, as if it had evaporated into unreality." But this was a misreading of his character. It was precisely, and paradoxically, this "unperson" who embodied a new type of the modern hero, a self-made man who shaped himself from nothing only so as to annihilate the world. Fest's ambivalence is reflected in his statement that, had Hitler been assassinated in 1938, "few would hesitate to call him one of the greatest of German statesmen, the consummator of Germany's history." Fest's Hitler, then, is a figure taken from the German romantic imagination, heroic in his boundless, relentless, and chaotic energy, even if it cannot but burn itself and everything surrounding it to extinction.

ALLAN BULLOCK'S BIOGRAPHY of Hitler, published originally in 1952 and in a revised version ten years later, took a very different direction from the works of Heiden and Fest. Bullock's subtitle was "a study in tyranny." He was interested primarily in "the means by which Hitler secured power in Germany" and subsequently "sought to extend his power outside Germany." Hence his focus was the establishment and the exercise of power by a man whose most crucial characteristic he saw as the urge to dominate. No wonder that Bullock concedes, about his discussion of Hitler following the outbreak of World War II, that "the figure of the man is submerged beneath the complicated narrative of politics and war." This "corresponds to Hitler's own sacrifice of his private life"—which "was meager and uninteresting at the best of times"—"to the demands of the position that he had created for himself."

Bullock's book is the ultimate political biography. While he views Hitler as the crucial moving force of Nazism, he also contends that the dictator was "an opportunist entirely without principle." To be sure, Hitler "showed both consistency and an astonishing power of will in pursuing his aims. Cynical and calculating in the exploitation of his histrionic gifts, he retained an unshakable belief in his historical role and in himself as a creature of destiny." Still, Hitler's essential characteristic was the pursuit of brute power, even if this was "dressed up in the doctrine of race, and failing that, a vindictive destructiveness." The Nazi "revolution of nihilism" was unlike other revolutions in that it "produced nothing"; and it was precisely "this emptiness, this lack of anything to justify the suffering he caused rather than his own monstrous and ungovernable will which makes Hitler both so repellent and so barren a figure." Hitler, concludes Bullock, will "have his place in history, but it will be alongside Attila the Hun, the barbarian king who was surnamed not 'the Great,' but 'the Scourge of God.'"

II.

THERE ARE TWO approaches to historical biography, which often overlap. One focuses on the person; the other portrays the person as the embodiment or the mirror of his or her time. This is what makes biography such a popular genre: we can identify with an individual while learning the history of an epoch. Yet finding the right balance between the intriguing but merely anecdotal and historically irrelevant details of a person's daily life, and the larger historical scene whose very complexity threatens to annihilate the individual, is a daunting challenge. This is why great biographies are rare.

Ian Kershaw's monumental work is the first comprehensive biography of Hitler by a major historian in several decades. This massive, extensively researched, extraordinarily balanced, and remarkably judicious study is likely to remain the definitive biography for a long time to come. It is the culmination of many years of study and writing, and its size and insistence on detail notwithstanding, it is also a highly readable, often exciting book, even for those who have already read as much as they thought they would ever want to read about this "Scourge of God."

Kershaw established his reputation as one of the most respected historians of Nazi Germany with a series of studies on popular opinion and political dissent in the Third Reich, the creation of the "Hitler myth," and the complex historiography of Nazism. Trained in the British empirical

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tradition, Kershaw also participated in the project of writing the history of everyday life in the Third Reich that was initiated in the 1970s by the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. Thus *Hitler* combines elements of Bullock's classic study of power with Kershaw's earlier interest in the relationship between the Führer and the people.

But finally this is a political history of Hitler's rise and fall. Owing to Kershaw's focus on the dictator after the outbreak of the war, and especially after 1941, both Hitler's person and the larger context of German society are brushed aside as the reader is plunged into the military and genocidal policies of the regime. Just as Hitler reaches the peak of his power, his personality comes to reflect the circumstances that he created and keeps creating to the bitter end. And just as the Führer's love affair with the German people begins to disintegrate, the people, without whose support he would have been nothing, lose all relevance as they retreat into their air-raid shelters and foxholes. Hitler becomes the center of a tale whose plot he can no longer control, the hollow core of his own narrative, increasingly opaque and faceless, providing few clues to the secret of his extraordinary hold on power.

LIKE BULLOCK, KERSHAW dismisses the need to ponder Hitler as a great man. To his mind, it is "better to avoid altogether the issue of 'greatness'" because it is "misconstrued, pointless, irrelevant, and potentially apologetic." It is misconstrued because it personalizes history; pointless because it depends on subjective judgment; irrelevant because it explains nothing; potentially apologetic because it conceals admiration for Hitler and lets everyone else off the hook. While Kershaw agrees that the "riddle" of Hitler has to do with "the emptiness of the private person," he concludes that in fact there "was no 'private life' for Hitler" but merely "empty routines," since eventually "Hitler's entire being came to be subsumed within the role he played to perfection: the role of 'Führer.'"

From here on, Kershaw defines his task as a biographer very simply, and very much in line with Bullock's understanding of his own undertaking almost fifty years ago: "It is a task which has to focus not upon the personality of Hitler, but squarely and directly upon *the character of his power—the power of the Führer*." This power, argues Kershaw, "derived only in part from Hitler himself," and to a much greater extent "was a social product—a creation of social expectations and motivations vested in Hitler by his followers." The Führer's claim to power was based not on popular affirmation or formalized function, but on "what he saw as his historic mission to save Germany." In this sense his power was "charismatic," not institutional, and it "depended upon the readiness of others to see 'heroic' qualities in him."

It would appear that, while Kershaw rejects the discussion of Hitler's historical "greatness," he lets it in through the back door by recognizing that, whatever we say on the matter, Hitler's rule was charismatic rule. And although much of Hitler's charisma did indeed derive from his growing power, it is not entirely clear that the notion of power suffices to explain it, especially if we keep in mind the visionary and prophetic powers that Hitler claimed for himself, and his obvious powers of suggestion long before he became chancellor and long after he had lost control over the events of the war and the fate of his Reich.

Unlike Bullock, Kershaw insists that for Hitler "it was not a matter of power for its own sake, devoid of content or meaning." Rather, Hitler was "an ideologue of unshakable convictions—the most radical of the radicals as exponent of an internally coherent (however repellent to us) 'world-view,' acquiring its thrust and potency from its combination of a very few basic ideas—integrated by the notion of human history as the history of racial struggle." This was indeed "a utopian vision of national redemption." As Kershaw forcefully demonstrates, Hitler's urge to win "living space" in the east and to "remove" and then to exterminate the Jews determined his policies and ruled his mind even as he maneuvered along a variety of crooked paths before finally coming to focus on those two (and, in his mind, related) goals with the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

III.

THE FIRST VOLUME of Kershaw's biography, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris*, which appeared in 1999, covers the period from Hitler's birth to the consolidation of his power as chancellor and Führer. In the final chapter of that volume, Kershaw develops the central thesis that underpins much of the second and larger volume, which takes us through the Munich appeasement into World War II and the final demise of the Third Reich. The moving force of the otherwise chaotic Nazi regime, argues Kershaw, was the notion of "working towards the Führer." As Prussian State Secretary Werner Willikens put it in 1934, "it is the duty of every single person to attempt, in the spirit of the Führer, to work towards him."

Thus, while the years of consolidation saw the erosion of collective government, the emergence of ever clearer ideological goals, and the expansion of Führer absolutism, "Hitler's personalized form of rule invited radical initiatives from below," which received his backing as long as they were "in line with his broadly defined goals." This made for "ferocious competition" among those who realized that "the way to power and advancement was through anticipating the 'Führer's will.'" Moreover, even on the lower levels of society, the idea of "working towards the Führer" propelled and justified the widespread denunciation, exploitation, and brutalization of those perceived to be Hitler's enemies and obstacles to the realization of his self-declared "mission."

This thesis is obviously related to the "functionalist" interpretation of Nazism. The idea that the chaotic struggle for power between governmental agencies and party agencies vying for Hitler's favor created a dynamic of "cumulative radicalization" goes back to Kershaw's old mentor Martin Broszat and his colleague Hans Mommsen. But Kershaw rejects the "functionalist" assumption of a weak Führer and a largely irrelevant ideological rhetoric, claiming instead that Hitler constituted the core of what Nazism was all about, and was powerfully motivated by his "world-view." In this way Kershaw grafts two polar interpretations of the Third Reich into a coherent and rich narrative while avoiding any complicated theoretical debate. The great strength of his book is the manner in which it seamlessly weaves together a dense historical texture that seems most of the time to flow with a disturbing inner logic.

By 1936, Kershaw observes, Hitler already "enjoyed the support of the overwhelming mass of the German people." He also came to see himself as infallible: "his self-image had reached the stage of outright hubris." Having led the reader through the history that brought Hitler to this moment of hubris, in the second volume Kershaw turns to Hitler's, and Germany's, inevitable nemesis. Thus the second volume is dedicated to investigating

> how Hitler could exercise the absolute power which he had been permitted to acquire; how the most mighty in the land became bound even further to a highly personalized form of rule ... and were unable to extricate themselves from the will of one man who was taking them unerringly down the road to destruction; and how the citizens of this modern state became complicitous in genocidal war of a character hitherto unknown to

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mankind, resulting in ... the final ruination of their own country.

Kershaw accomplishes admirably the goals that he sets himself. He meticulously reconstructs the growing radicalization of politics in Germany on the eve of the war and the manner in which the intensification of the Führer cult relegated all other centers of power, such as the army and the bureaucracy, to mere functional elites entirely dependent on Hitler's whim and will. It is true that, while Hitler pushed relentlessly for territorial expansion, popular distaste for foreign adventures culminated in 1938, during the crisis over Czechoslovakia, in a "real war psychosis." But the mechanism of "working towards the Führer" simultaneously made for the emergence of "a genocidal mentality" whereby, without clear instructions from the top, Germans on all levels of society assumed that Hitler would approve of harsh and brutal anti-Jewish measures, especially when they also brought material benefits.

Still, Hitler played a central role not only in unleashing the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in 1938, but more generally in encouraging an atmosphere of "destruction and annihilation, not just emigration, of the Jews." And this, in turn, was closely linked to Hitler's determination to go to war. As Kershaw puts it: "War—the essence of the Nazi system which had developed under his leadership—was for Hitler inevitable. Only the timing and the direction were at issue." Hitler had decided by 1939 that "there was no time to wait." And "in war Nazism came into its own." Born out of a lost war, and sworn to reverse the verdict of history through violence and destruction, Nazism saw "national renewal" as synonymous with the annihilation of its enemies. War was genocide, genocide was war. Any separation between the two was inconceivable from the Nazi perspective.

This became clear from the very beginning of the Polish campaign, which was conducted as an "imperialist conquest" intended to enslave the population and to loot their property and their lands. Moreover, while the occupation of Poland saw the beginning of "ethnic cleansing" abroad, it also occasioned the beginning of the "euthanasia" campaign, the mass murder of the mentally and physically handicapped in the Reich. Significantly, just as the war against Poland was popular in Germany owing to traditional anti-Polish sentiments, so too "the mentality which led to the killing of the mentally sick was no creation of Hitler," although it was his rule that facilitated its transformation into state policy. It was this combination of popular prejudices and state-directed policies that made for the expansion of the "euthanasia" action into the genocide of millions of Jews, in part implemented by the same teams that had murdered the handicapped, and using remarkably similar methods. In 1939, Kershaw writes, "no 'complete solution' to the 'Jewish problem' was yet in sight," but the urge to "work towards" a Führer known for his vehement anti-Jewish sentiments would "ensure that, in the conquered and subjugated territories in the east, a 'solution' would gradually begin to emerge before long."

IV.

HITLER'S MOST MOMENTOUS decision was to attack the Soviet Union following the failure to bomb Britain into peace or submission. This decision ultimately destroyed Nazism; it also spelled the annihilation of European Jewry. In planning Operation Barbarossa, Hitler's generals were at one with him in their expectation of a quick victory and in their intention to conduct it as a war of extermination without any regard for international conventions of warfare or basic moral codes. For Kershaw, it was precisely because of Hitler's increasing obsession with the conduct of the war, and the consequent disintegration of state administration, that "the radicalization entailed in the process of 'working towards the Führer' equally inevitably accelerated." Hitler was not a "weak dictator"; he enjoyed unlimited power and immense popularity, and nobody could challenge his authority. But his highly personalized rule and his preoccupation with military events generated both wild competition between government agencies and progressively genocidal policies.

As Hitler descends into his command bunker, his biographer follows him there. Here the focus shifts mainly to military affairs and, to a lesser extent, to diplomatic affairs. From this point on, the reader is largely confined to the claustrophobic atmosphere of crowded rooms populated by a progressively deranged generalissimo surrounded by a small band of generals and party mandarins. Relying heavily on the recently discovered diaries of Joseph Goebbels, Kershaw sketches a fascinating picture of the war from Hitler's perspective. There are some speculations on what was happening in Hitler's own mind, and some telling anecdotes about the little that was left of his "private" life. There are also astute observations about the morale of the German people in the rear and the soldiers at the front, using especially the reports of the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) on the public "mood."

But the last five hundred or so pages of Kershaw's book are given to Hitler's primary preoccupation, the conduct of the war. Issues such as the massive exploitation of forced labor in the German economy and the restructuring of the armaments industry get short shrift in Kershaw's account, as does the daily life of civilians in the rear and of soldiers at the front. Questions relating to the creation of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, or racial community, in Germany, and the role of the Gestapo, the propaganda machinery, and ideological indoctrination in molding people's minds and enforcing modes of thought and conduct, are also largely neglected. Yet Kershaw pays more attention than any previous biographer to the Nazi regime's genocidal and criminal policies.

Consistent with his general thesis about the nature of Hitler's rule, Kershaw stresses that "racial policy unfolded its own dynamic ... with scarcely any direct involvement by Hitler." While Hitler's "visceral detestation of the Jews was undiminished," he devoted little time to the "Jewish Question" in 1940. For those charged with Jewish policies, however, "the broad mandate to 'solve the Jewish Question' associated with Hitler's 'mission'" sufficed as the basis for increasingly radical measures. With the invasion of Russia, Hitler's twin obsessions with *Lebensraum* and the "Jewish Question" merged to form the core of the war of extermination in the east.

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The Moment Preceding

A reverie, small fabrication
of silence, some amulet or woven purse,
some moment in which the languor
is preceded by quiet, this moment comes
first in the dawnlight,
a deep and peculiar clarity, peered into,
some color scheme barely perceptible, this
silence
in which the rigorously fought out nightwar, the peace
established through centuries of tedious
negotiation, is not blown away
or thrown aside but breached nonetheless
by a simple, barely detectable epistemology,
this tiny shift in consciousness itself,
expressed just now by the scent of gardenias.

Charlie Smith

To be sure, earlier ideas for a comprehensive "territorial solution," such as sending the Jews to Madagascar, concentrating them in the "Lublin reservation," or deporting them to the Soviet Arctic regions, were already synonymous with genocide. But the failure of the Blitzkrieg in Russia led to an incremental yet inexorable shift to a continent-wide genocide that was increasingly implemented in sophisticated killing installations built especially for this purpose. In Hitler's mind, Bolshevism and the Jews were identical: the destruction of one necessitated the destruction of the other. In this sense, there was a terrible inner logic to Hitler's insistence on killing the Jews even as Germany's hope to win the war began to fade, just as he could applaud Stalin's declaration of all-out partisan war since "it gives us the possibility of exterminating anything opposing us." And, as German generals liked to say: "Where there's a partisan, there's a Jew, and where there's a Jew, there's a partisan."

Conceived from the outset as an exterminatory undertaking, the war in the east was also supposed to furnish Germany with lands for settlement and endless supplies of food. Thus Heinrich Himmler planned the deportation of thirty million Russians farther east, so as to make room for German settlers, and Hermann Göring spoke of starving to death twenty million to thirty million Soviet citizens so as to have more food for the Germans. But despite killing between twenty million and twenty-seven million Russians, Germany's plans for demographic restructuring failed in the face of stubborn Soviet resistance. As the military situation deteriorated, Hitler became all the more confident of his own strategic genius and all the more distrustful of his military commanders. Kershaw notes that Hitler bears a great deal of responsibility for the Wehrmacht's failures, even if his generals must share the blame. What is certain is that most of the generals, indeed most Nazi leaders, would have put an end to the war before the final catastrophe had Hitler been removed from the scene.

While his impact on Germany's conduct of the war was decisive, at home Hitler became "an absentee Führer," rarely venturing out of his command post in East Prussia and making ever fewer public speeches and appearances. The enormous toll of military and civilian casualties left Hitler quite indifferent. Instead he proclaimed that the Allied strategic bombing campaign was laying the groundwork for postwar urban reconstruction. While he spent hours contemplating the fantastic plans for a newly designed Berlin (and Linz, his Austrian hometown), he never once visited a bombed city or a field hospital.

Curiously, even as the genocide of the Jews was well under way, there is little evidence of Hitler's direct involvement in it. He did not even show much interest in the details of their murder. While he raved about the Jews as the root of all evil, any mention of the actual killing process was strictly forbidden. To be sure, unlike the fighting at the front, the war against the Jews was a highly "successful" undertaking; and unlike his deteriorating relations with the generals, Hitler met no resistance from the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Thanks to public protests, the "euthanasia" campaign was officially stopped (though it was secretly continued) in the summer of 1941; but there was no such opposition, save for a few brave and wholly ineffective individuals, against the genocide of the Jews.

The consensus over the "need" to "solve the Jewish Question" was indeed remarkable. It has been said that Germans did not support Hitler because of his anti-Semitism, and that many may have followed him despite it. But it seems that the persecution of the Jews was, in fact, one issue on which there was little argument and little need for official encouragement. Killing Jews was a sure way to "work towards the Führer" and to facilitate the realization of his "mission." Still, it appears that Hitler was reluctant to leave any traces of his direct involvement in genocide, possibly because of his fear of future Jewish vengeance.

In this context it is also important to note Kershaw's argument that "no order or directive [by Hitler] was necessary" to launch the "Final Solution." All that was needed was the Führer's general approval of plans laid out by Reinhard Heydrich, the architect of the operation. Kershaw agrees with recent assertions that the decisive moment in Hitler's mind was the declaration of war on the United States in December 1941, which transformed a continental confrontation into a world war, and thus legitimized, in his mind, the realization of his "prophecy" of January 30, 1939 that under such circumstances the Jews would be exterminated. But Kershaw rejects the notion that at the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942 Heydrich was already "orchestrating an existing and finalized programme of mass extermination in death camps." He believes that this program took shape gradually over the next few months with the construction of killing facilities in Poland.

Only when the plan for mass deportation of Jews from Western Europe was ready in June 1942—with transports, mostly to Auschwitz, beginning in July—could one say that the "final solution" was under way. Indeed, by the end of the year the SS claimed that some four million Jews had already been killed. Hitler was not directly involved in any of this. Yet his "role had been decisive and indispensable in the road to the 'final solution.'" To be sure, "complicity was massive, from the Wehrmacht leadership and captains of industry down to Party hacks, bureaucratic minions, and ordinary Germans." But "without Hitler, and the unique regime he headed, the creation of a programme to bring about the physical extermination of the Jews of Europe would have been unthinkable."

V.

FOLLOWING THE DISASTER of Stalingrad, writes Kershaw, "for all the lingering strength of support, the German people's love affair with Hitler was at an end. Only the bitter process of divorce remained." And yet, as Kershaw himself demonstrates, Hitler still retained an extraordinary hold on those closest to him and on large (albeit diminishing) segments of the public. He may not have been as adored as he was in the past, but many perceived him as the nation's fate and the nation's compass, and most peo-

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ple had no idea what would become of Germany without him.

Why did the Germans continue to fight and to die for Hitler for another two and a half years with such extraordinary self-sacrifice and determination? Hitler, as Kershaw observes, was by this time "in many respects an empty, burnt-out hull of an individual." His military plans were sheer fantasy, and his temper was feared by those closest to him. And yet "his resilience and strength of will remained extraordinary," and "his power was still immense, unrestricted, and uncontested." Kershaw tries to explain this contradiction by noting that Hitler's power emanated from "the strangely shapeless regime over which he presided," the astonishing lack of cooperation between governmental agencies and the general administrative chaos. But this does not explain Germany's ability to resist an increasingly superior coalition of enemies by doubling its output of armaments, and by exhibiting extraordinary military abilities in conscription, training, and tactical leadership, and by maintaining satisfactory morale in the rear and at the front.

It may be true that "as a system of government, Hitler's dictatorship had no future." But the fact of the matter is that most modern states would have collapsed far sooner under the strain of war against such vastly superior odds. Goebbels said at the time, "We have not only a 'leadership crisis,' but strictly speaking a 'Leader crisis!'" Yet it was precisely this leader, increasingly detached from reality and from the people, whose continued existence generated the tremendous energy needed to continue fighting a war that more and more people recognized as hopeless.

There is little doubt that fear was a strong motive. Even as people lost faith in victory, they were unwilling to face the consequences of defeat. Germans were made to believe that the collapse of the Reich would bring both personal and national catastrophe. Hitler perceived the defeat of Germany as the victory of the Jews, no matter how many millions had already been murdered, and he became increasingly obsessed with the Jews in the latter phases of the war. But this fear of Jewish vengeance could be heard in wider sectors of German society as well, reflecting the regime's propaganda. There certainly was a growing gap between Hitler, who "lived increasingly in a world of illusion," and the German people, who had become increasingly disillusioned; but Hitler's illusions of victory were simultaneously shared by at least part of the population.

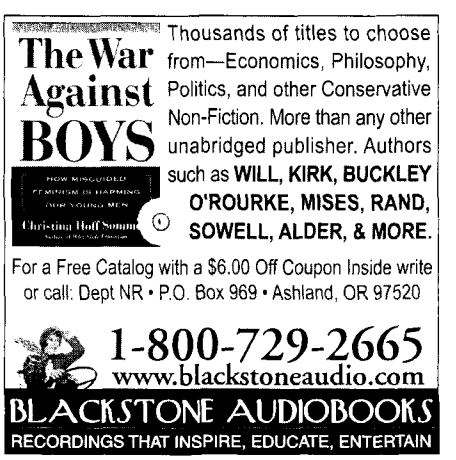
If Hitler's illusions had to do with his inflated belief in himself, his people's illusions had to do with their lingering belief in him. Fear alone is not a sufficient explanation of Germany's stubborn persistence in Hitler's cause. Fear could have led the Germans also to apathy or to surrender; but it did not. Only when it is combined with hope, however irrational and illusory, can fear push one to extremes of courage and perseverance. Clearly "the regime's leaders had burned their boats with the Dictator in the regime's genocide and other untold acts of inhumanity," and for this reason they were unable to contemplate either overthrow or surrender. But the sense of complicity in Hitler's mass crimes went deeper than that in German society, and this, too, was a powerful motivation. Hitler may have been "losing touch ever more with reality, hoping for miracles ... tilting at windmills"; but as long as he was still alive, how many more Germans shared this predilection with him? The complicity of the Wehrmacht certainly goes a long way toward explaining its tenacity. As late as the fall of 1943 and the summer of 1944, explicit statements about the genocide of the Jews made by Hitler and Himmler to large gatherings of senior Wehrmacht officers were enthusiastically applauded.

THE SMALL GROUP of officers and civil servants who conspired against Hitler were the exception that proved the rule. These heroic men, most of whom were executed after the failed putsch attempt of July 20, 1944, are depicted in glowing terms by Kershaw, but they have been more critically treated in recent scholarship. As Theodore Hamerow and Christian Gerlach have shown, many of the conspirators began by rendering strong and in some cases invaluable support to Hitler and his cause. Moreover, some of the bravest and most single-minded among them were personally involved in the implementation of the regime's criminal policies even as they plotted against their Führer. In other words, even those who sacrificed their lives in opposing Hitler shared significant elements of his worldview; and that is precisely why it was impossible for the majority of his countrymen to turn against him. Some of the conspirators' plans for a post-Hitler Germany included a fair amount of the Wehrmacht's early conquests, expressed the hope of maintaining German hegemony in Europe, and showed little interest in restoring democracy.

Indeed, as Kershaw points out, "the failure of the bomb-plot revived strong support for Hitler not only within Germany, but also among soldiers at the front." The "fury turned against those seen as traitors within" showed that the "Führer cult was far from extinguished." It also indicated, at this late stage of the war, that there may have been a greater congruence of views and illusions between the Führer and the people than even Kershaw suggests. By July 1944, after all, it was obvious that the war was really over, and only the extent of Germany's ultimate destruction was still at issue. Even more astonishing is the fact that as late as the early 1950s, well after Hitler and his regime had vanished, one-third of those questioned in opinion polls still criticized the attempted assassination of the Führer.

HITLER'S DEMISE WAS as wretched as his beginning. More or less alone in his bunker, he poisoned his dog and the mistress whom he had hidden from the public and married only after he ceased to matter, and then he shot himself. In accordance with his orders, both their bodies were burned with whatever petrol was left in the vicinity of the bunker. But he took with him a staggering number of his own people, and even larger numbers of others. Between June and September 1944, more than one million German soldiers were killed or captured or went missing. By July 1944, in the last great extermination operation by the SS, 437,402 Hungarian Jews were sent to their death at Auschwitz. By October 1944, the Germans had suppressed the Warsaw uprising at the cost of 200,000 Polish victims. And the thought that Nazi Germany might have produced an atomic bomb—it was not a particularly far-fetched possibility—should make us understand that the permanent establishment of a genocidal regime in large tracts of the world came closer to reality than we would like retrospectively to believe. As Hitler said following the very last German military campaign, the Ardennes offensive in December 1944: "We will not capitulate. Never. We can go down. But we will take a world with us."

In the end, Hitler wanted only to destroy as much as he could destroy before he, too, was annihilated. "It was," Kershaw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remarks, "as if he had a death-wish—not just for himself, but for Germany and its people; an invitation to nemesis." Having already murdered so many other peoples, the only people that he could still destroy were the Germans. And by failing to win the war, the Germans had betrayed him, proving to his satisfaction that they lacked "internal value." They had proved the weaker in the struggle. It was only at this point that his satraps balked. Speer refused to carry out Hitler's order to destroy Germany's economic infrastructure. But the suffering of the Germans mattered nothing to Hitler. He still saw himself as indispensable, insisting that "if anything happens to me, Germany is lost, since I have no successor." By this time, ironically, the only person Hitler still admired was Stalin, who was endowed with a "brutal realism" and "who knew exactly what he wanted and had learned his method of atrocities from Genghis Khan."

Even as the Reich was breaking apart, as Kershaw notes, the "Führer cult was still far from dead," at least in the "inner part of the 'charismatic community,'" Hitler's chief military and Nazi Party paladins. Moreover, considering that the Germans inflicted some 170,000 casualties on the Red Army in the very last days of the battle for Berlin against a vastly superior enemy, it is clear that loyalty to Hitler, the Nazi regime, and the *Volksgemeinschaft* was still capable of generating tremendous energies, at least as long as Hitler was alive. Besieged in his bunker, a sick and prematurely old man, cut off from most of the remnants of Germany's once mighty armed forces, Hitler maintained an extraordinary influence over all those he could reach, which finally evaporated only after he blasted his own brains with his pistol.

After all is said and done, what was the root of Hitler's power? Kershaw's remarkable biography provides a rich and nuanced interpretation of the manner in which Hitler attained, exercised, and held on to power—that is, it brilliantly accomplishes what it sets out to do. But for all its explanatory sophistication, we are still left wondering about the root of Hitler's hold on an entire nation, on the masses that worked, suffered, and died for him without rebelling, on the intellectuals who glorified him even as he mocked and despised them, on the generals who followed his commands even as he led their armies to destruction, on mothers and wives, on clerics and young people.

This is not a question that Kershaw posed to himself, and he cannot be faulted for failing to answer it. But it is, in a certain sense, the central question. For now that we know the whole sordid tale, from beginning to end, how is it that we continue to feel that some essential element is missing from the chilling puzzle? It turns out that the knowledge of the facts does not make for a complete understanding. Kershaw stresses his unwillingness "to engage in moral disquisitions on the problem of evil in historical personality." But finally there is no escape from such disquisitions. For Hitler's power emanated from, and kept producing endless quantities of, evil.

And yet his power was nourished also by a vast reservoir of enthusiasm, sacrifice, and love. It is not true that Hitler was supported *despite* his evil intentions and evil deeds. For Hitler and his regime were openly, brazenly evil. So was he supported *because* he was evil? Not exactly. Such a reading distorts the manner in which people understood the nature of his regime and his ideology, and the reasons for their admiration for the Führer. We must conclude, rather, that Hitler's most terrifying "accomplishment" was to present evil as virtue—to sell destruction as creation, hate as love, the waste of lives as heroic sacrifice, murderous nihilism as greatness.

He managed, in other words, to present himself as a great man, his worldview as the path to greatness, and his "mission" as a great crusade against the forces of darkness. How this astonishing reversal was accomplished and came to be believed by so many millions of people, how it sustained an astonishing determination in the face of looming self-destruction, still remains unexplained. Yet this is precisely what we must strive to understand, because Hitler will not remain the last instance in which those who are followed as knights of justice turn out to be the devil's minions. ■

The Importance of Being Earnest

By Rochelle Gurstein

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Poems and Other Writings edited by J. D. McClatchy

(The Library of America, 854 pp., $35)

With the publication of F. O. Matthiessen's hugely influential *American Renaissance* in 1941, the modern-day pantheon of nineteenth-century American writers was established: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman. The only other writer to be admitted into this select company has been Emily Dickinson, a recluse who published only seven poems in her own time and was virtually unknown. For critics, scholars, and ordinary readers of the nineteenth century, however, this grouping would have seemed eccentric at best. They would have agreed with their famed man of letters William Dean Howells, who in 1907 tenderly evoked the names of "Emerson and Hawthorne, Longfellow and Lowell, Whittier and Holmes" as belonging to "that golden prime which we Americans shall not see renewed in the course of many centuries."

The entry on "American Literature" by George E. Woodberry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910 is also representative of nineteenth-century opinion. Even though we have long grown accustomed to the myth of the great artist who went unappreciated in his own day only to be deified by the next generation, it is still something of a shock to discover the low valuation of three of Matthiessen's heroes. Melville is mentioned only in passing, and *Moby-Dick* is not mentioned at all. "The sea-novel was developed by Herman Melville and his successors," Woodberry instructs, "but these tales, in spite of being highly commended by lovers of adventure, have taken no more hold than the work of [William Gilmore] Simms."

Thoreau is identified by the encyclopedist as a member of the transcendentalist group, as Emerson's "young friend," and as "the author of *Walden* (1854) and father of the nature-writers, who as a hermit-type

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has had some European vogue and shows an increasing hold as an exception among men, but whose work has little literary distinction." Whitman merits an entire paragraph, though Woodberry made clear that his reputation was by no means settled. In England his poetry was received as an expression of "the new and original America, the unknown democracy," and in Germany he had "some vogue" owing to his "naturalism." As for his own countrymen, they "steadily refuse to accept him as representative of themselves, and his naturalism is uninteresting to them." But Woodberry also noted that "a group apparently increasing in critical authority treat his work as significant."

As for Emerson and Hawthorne, nineteenth-century literary judgment was in accord with Matthiessen's. Woodberry placed them in the first rank of New England writers. But in their esteemed company he included Longfellow. Indeed, he gave him pride of place: "Of this group of men, Longfellow is the most national figure, and from the point of view of literary history the most significant by virtue of what he contributed to American romanticism in the large." And this judgment, too, is a shock to modern sensibilities. Longfellow makes no appearance in Matthiessen's great book. For a long time now, he has been relegated to the category of "schoolroom poet," with Bryant, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell, who, with the exception of Bryant, were the leading lights of Howells's "golden prime."

LONGFELLOW LIVED FROM 1807 to 1882. During his active years, he published twelve volumes of poetry and five book-length poems, as well as translations (the most famous being of *The Divine Comedy*), anthologies, verse plays, a novel, and a travel sketch. His reputation as America's greatest poet was assured with his first book, *Voices of the Night*, which appeared in 1839. "I read your poems over and over, and over again...," his friend Hawthorne wrote to him. "Nothing equal to some of them was ever written in this world, this Western world, I mean; and it would not hurt my conscience much to include the other hemisphere."

The public agreed with Hawthorne, and the book immediately went through three editions. Longfellow's poetry was so well-loved that he was able to quit his job as professor of modern languages at Harvard, and he came to occupy a position never before attained in American literary life: the self-sustaining poet. It is no exaggeration to say that Longfellow, retiring and modest in the extreme, became a literary sensation. He was besieged by unannounced visits from European dignitaries and ordinary tourists, whom he patiently received, and he was daily burdened by an ever-growing "mountain" of letters from "total strangers" who questioned him about his poems, sent him their own poems for commentary, asked for advice about their personal lives, and badgered him for his autograph. Longfellow's sweet nature was legendary, and almost no request went unanswered. During the last fifteen years of his life, he wrote close to 9,500 known letters, not including surviving replies to 920 autograph-seekers. His fame was such that he could not appear in public without being accosted. Once he attended a rehearsal of a play, and, as Howells tells the story, "he was intercepted at every step in going out, and made to put his name to the photographs of himself which his worshippers produced from their persons."

BUT LITERARY REPUTATION is a fragile thing, and by the early 1930s Longfellow's reputation was so shattered that the critic Ludwig Lewisohn could dispense with him out of hand: "Who, except wretched schoolchildren, now reads Longfellow?" Once Longfellow's fortunes had fallen, accounts of his life and work no longer took for granted that people still knew of his earlier fame. In 1933, the *Dictionary of American Biography* felt compelled to point out that *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie* went through six printings in three months; and that *The Courtship of Miles Standish and Other Poems* sold 10,000 copies in London the first day it was offered for sale and 25,000 copies over the next two months; and that "The Village Blacksmith," which became one of his most popular poems, sold for $15 in 1840, and "The Hanging of the Crane" for $3,000 in 1874. Apparently nothing less than empirical proof could now impress readers incredulous of Longfellow's former repute.

It also became the habit to establish that it was not only common readers who adored Longfellow. The most eminent American writers (with the exception of Poe) celebrated Longfellow as America's most distinguished poet, and abroad Dickens, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Trollope hailed him as such. During his last visit to England, Cambridge and Oxford awarded him honorary degrees, lavish dinners were given in his honor, and Queen Victoria held a private audience with him. The *Dictionary of American Biography* noted that before 1900, Longfellow had been translated into German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, Bohemian, Hungarian, and Russian. In his own time, it was said again and again, Longfellow was more popular than Tennyson and Browning. In 1889, his bust was placed in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, the first and only time an American poet achieved this distinction.

By the 1930s, however, Longfellow's popularity could be used against him. With the chasm between high culture and mass culture ever widening, popularity was recast as a sign of pandering to conventional bourgeois taste, which was shorthand for artistic failure. So it also became common practice to adduce admirers of Longfellow who could not be guiltily associated with musty Victorians, such as Liszt, who set the introduction of *The Golden Legend* to music, or Baudelaire, who adapted the "Peace-Pipe" section of *The Song of Hiawatha* into French.

Perhaps the most poignant testimony to the bard's fall from favor is that the few who write appreciatively of him today—such as J. D. McClatchy, the editor of the Library of America edition, and the poet Dana Gioia—feel obliged to remind readers that they know several lines of Longfellow's poems by heart, even if they do not know who penned them: "Under a spreading chestnut-tree / The village smithy stands" ("The Village Blacksmith"); "Listen, my children, and you shall hear / Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere" ("Paul Revere's Ride"); "By the shore of Gitche Gumee, / By the shining Big-Sea-Water" ("The Song of Hiawatha"); "This is the forest primeval" ("Evangeline"); "I shot an arrow into the air, / It fell to earth, I knew not where" ("The Arrow and the Song"). McClatchy and Gioia have also felt compelled to note that many of Longfellow's lines have entered the common currency of the English language: "Ships that pass in the night," "The patter of little feet," "Into each life some rain must fall," "Footprints on the sands of time," "When she was good, she was very, very good." If Gioia is right that "language remembers the poems its speakers love best, even if only as clichés," then we can only wonder at the pathos of Longfellow's fallen state. What did his contemporaries see that we no longer see?

THE BEST PLACE to begin is with one of Longfellow's earliest and most beloved poems, "A Psalm of Life," which appeared in *Voices of the Night*:

> Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
> Life is but an empty dream!—
> For the soul is dead that slumbers,
> And things are not what they seem.
>
> Life is real! Life is earnest!
> And the grave is not its goal;
> Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul.

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Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout
and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

The tenor of this poem—hopeful, sincere, earnest, simple—could not be further removed from the cynicism and the detachment of our own time, so it is no wonder that hostile critics have long used it to indict Longfellow and his age for its alleged shallowness, conventionality, sentimentality, moralism, and willingness to sacrifice art to didactic purposes. Yet this predictable response only makes sense as a consequence of the modern revolt against the Victorians, the victory of which has made their ideals and their values unintelligible as anything but benighted habits of mind to be cast off in the name of personal freedom.

Given that so few remnants of Victorianism have survived past the 1950s, it is worthwhile to try to approach the nineteenth century with the kind of open-mindedness reserved for eras more remote from the present day. Then we might think without prejudice about what Longfellow meant by the phrase "life is earnest," and why it resonated with his contemporaries—so much so that "A Psalm of Life" was recited on a battlefield by a dying soldier. And it is no coincidence that Thomas Carlyle, the most influential thinker of his day, affixed this same phrase in German to the title page of *Past and Present* (1843), and that he had proudly borrowed it from Schiller.

By the time Wilde wrote *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1895, earnestness had become a term of mockery and derision, a fate from which it is unlikely to recover anytime soon. But for Victorians such as Carlyle and Longfellow, to be in earnest meant recognizing that life was more elevated and more serious than money-making and sensual gratification. And this recognition entailed the assertion of a transcendent moral and spiritual order, and a vow to struggle against the forces of evil in one's soul and in one's society. To be in earnest was not to be priggish or dour, as critics charged; it was a refusal to treat the fundamental questions of life lightly, as if they were merely an intellectual game.

This helps to explain how a thinker of John Ruskin's stature could speak of "A Psalm of Life" in terms that seem so preposterous today. In a letter to his father in 1851, he recorded that the poem "is now known by heart by nearly all the modern reformers and agitators, good and bad, but does good to all of them." What Ruskin particularly admired was the "character" of Longfellow's poems: "Other poetry soothes and comforts—Longfellow's strengthens, knits up, and makes resolute." Ruskin thought so highly of this poem that he questioned "whether all Byron's works put together have had so much real influence, with all their popularity, as this single poem, because Byron's influence is for the most part on young and comparatively unformed minds—Longfellow's of a reversed kind and on the strongest minds of the day." It is precisely such a judgment that modern critics have rejected by labeling Longfellow a "schoolroom poet." His fine sentiments now feel so naïve as to be suitable only for children.

But it is not only earnestness that has become an attitude alien to modern sensibility. The poetic genres in which Longfellow excelled—pastoral romance, folk epic, framed tales—drew on European traditions that modernists renounced in favor of free-verse lyric. What could be more hopelessly outdated than long, rhyming, storybook poems such as *Evangeline*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," and *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, the very poems that earned Longfellow his eminence?

Still, even hostile critics grant that those poems satisfied a fledgling nation's yearning for a mythic past of evocative landscapes inhabited by gentle Indian warriors, good-hearted Plymouth colonists, Revolutionary War heroes, innocent star-crossed lovers—in short, a picture of the new world, pastoral and beckoning. Longfellow's audience relished his lively storytelling, but they also appreciated his versatility in genre and form. And sympathetic critics have always remarked on his extraordinary prosodic virtuosity. Gioia recently argued that Longfellow's "range and originality in metrics remains unprecedented," but noted ruefully that "in the aftermath of the free-verse revolution" few poets and critics care enough about prosody to appreciate Longfellow's achievement.

What is at stake here is a conflict between two opposing views of poetry, the outcome of which has consigned Longfellow to the mediocre realm of the "schoolroom poet" and has elevated Whitman to the pinnacle of the American Renaissance. It is to see the world a little more starkly and a little more freshly if we return to the year 1855, in which both *The Song of Hiawatha* and *Leaves of Grass* were published. On September 23, 1855, Charles Eliot Norton, an intimate of Longfellow and an exceedingly cultivated and cosmopolitan man of letters, wrote to his close friend James Russell Lowell about both new books. Longfellow, said Norton, had attempted something truly different. Having read the works of the early ethnologists Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and J. G. E. Heckewelder, the poet wove together an epic folk tale from the Indians' own legends. Norton noted somewhat reluctantly that "it has a little the air of having been crammed for, and written not from the fulness of the heart but the fulness of the head." Yet it was saved by its style, which Norton described as "very charming, ... fresh, free from conceits and prettinesses." Longfellow's model was the trochaic verse of the Finnish epic the *Kalevala*, and Norton found it "exquisitely modulated, and managed with all the melodious skill with which Longfellow always controls the metres that he uses."

This judgment flies in the face not only of later critics but also of many of Longfellow's contemporaries, for his unusual, singsong meter was parodied from the moment the poem appeared. It is not difficult to see why:

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the doorway of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

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Photo of Ted van Griethuysen and Robert Sella by Carol Rosegg

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And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendor,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.
And the people from the margin
Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendor,
Till it sank into the vapors
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance.

In his letter to Lowell, Norton spoke of *Leaves of Grass* as a book "worth knowing about" and mentioned Emerson's famous letter to Whitman, in which he expressed his "warmest admiration and encouragement." "It is no wonder that he likes it," Norton wryly observed, "for Walt Whitman has read the 'Dial' and 'Nature,' and combines the characteristics of a Concord philosopher with those of a New York fireman." It was this incongruence that Norton, schooled in the classical tradition of literary decorum, found so unsettling. "There are some passages of most vigorous and vivid writing, some superbly graphic description, great stretches of imagination,—and then passages of intolerable coarseness,—not gross and licentious, but simply disgustingly coarse." Today it is hard to discern what Norton found "disgustingly coarse" in *Leaves of Grass*, or why he "would be sorry to know that any woman had looked into it past the title-page." But this says as much about our own incapacity for shock as it does about Norton's oversensitivity, which, for Victorians, was the defining mark of cultivated sensibility.

Lowell, in his response to Norton, thought his friend had been too generous. For him, Whitman raised the question of creative genius and its limits, a question not yet settled in the middle of the nineteenth century: "When a man aims at originality he acknowledges himself consciously unoriginal, a want of self-respect which does not often go along with the capacity for great things." The cult of genius is so much with us that it is easy to forget its recent origin—and that it undermined the long-revered classical tradition, which had at its heart the universality of human nature and values. From that perspective, originality was regarded not as a sign of genius but as a failure of artistic imagination to free itself from personal idiosyncrasy.

Lowell, himself an accomplished poet, had succeeded Longfellow as professor of modern languages at Harvard. His taste was anything but provincial. Yet the classical inheritance left him with a disdain for excessive experimentation or theatricality:

> It is not the volcanoes, after all, that give a lasting and serene delight, but those quiet old giants without a drop of fire-blood in their veins that lie there basking their unwarmable old sides in the sun no more everlasting than they—patent unshiftable ballast that keep earth and human thought trimmed and true on an even keel. Ah, the cold-blooded old monsters, how little they care for you and me! Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe—are they not everlasting boundary-stones that mark the limits of a noble reserve and self-restraint, and seem to say, "Outside of us is Chaos—go there if you like—we knew better—it is a dreary realm where moan the ghosts of dead-born children, and where the ghost of mad old Lear is king?"

What was wanted in poetry was large, universal themes and general character types—the kind of poetry at which Longfellow excelled and Victorians cherished and read aloud. Indeed, verse such as Longfellow's, even though it is filled with romantic subjects, figures, and places, is best understood as a last remnant of the classical inheritance. On this view, the personal confessional was "morbid" or "egoistic," while poetry that most resembled public address was esteemed. In his tribute to Longfellow after his death, Norton spoke of the poet in these terms: "It was not by depth of thought or by original views of nature that he won his place in the world's regard; but it was by sympathy with the feelings common to good men and women everywhere, and by the simple, direct, sincere, and delicate expression of them, that he gained the affection of mankind."

Elsewhere Norton elaborated on the nature of Longfellow's achievement: "In exquisitely modulated verse he ... gave form to [people's] vague ideals, and utterance to their stammering aspirations. In revealing his own pure and sincere nature, he helped others to recognize their own better selves." But even as Norton wrote this appreciation for *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* in 1888, this view of poetry was already on the wane. And by the time of the centenary celebration of Longfellow's birth in 1907, the revolt against gentility and classicism was in full bloom. Howells was forced to defend the poet against charges of moralism, but the terms of his defense suggest he was waging a losing battle: "I will only say for myself that I find the pieces in which he charms and teaches far outnumbering those in which he teaches and charms; that first he is an artist and then a moralist." And to Paul Elmer More fell the task of saving Longfellow from those who thought him shallow, though More was on no firmer ground than Howells: "We are apt to take our poets rather solemnly, when we read them at all, to search for deep and complex meanings; and in the process we often lose the inward serenity and unvexed faith which it is the mission of the poet to bestow." (The admission that no deep and complex meanings are to be found in Longfellow is rather a damning one, but not altogether correct.)

George Woodberry, who had been a student of Norton's at Harvard and later became his friend, summed up a growing litany not only against Longfellow but against all the New England writers:

> The only ardours displayed by its writers are moral, patriotic, or religious, and in none of them is there any sense of conflict. The life which they knew was wholesome, regular, still free from urban corruption, the experience of a plain, prosperous, and law-abiding people.... No tragedy was written, no love poetry, no novel of passion. No literature is so maiden-pure. It is by refinement rather than power that it is most distinguished, by taste and cultivation, by conscientiousness in art, in poetic and stylistic craft.... If it is undistinguished by any work of supreme genius, it reflects broadly and happily and in enduring forms the national tradition of the land in its century.

Woodberry clearly saw the shortcomings of the New England writers, but still he found reasons to treat them with sympathy and respect. But a new generation, dedicated to living honestly and without subterfuge, could only sneer at the timidity and the complacency of their "maiden-pure" forebears. They had no use for their refinement, their loftiness, their conscientiousness. And they had nothing but contempt for their grand ideals and their personal discretion—all of which Van Wyck Brooks dismissed as "highbrow" in 1915, in his powerful diatribe *America's Coming-of-Age*.

Setting the terms for what would become a familiar and devastating attack on gentility, Brooks mocked "the fastidious refinement and aloofness of the chief American writers." They stood "too remote from life" and achieved their "own salvation (after the Puritan fashion) by avoiding contact with reality." Longfellow

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was repudiated, along with Irving, Bryant, Lowell, Whittier, and Holmes, on these grounds. Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, and Hawthorne also were guilty of evading reality, but they were redeemed for Brooks by their "personal approach" to literature, which he thought "the only fruitful approach." The single nineteenth-century writer "who comes home to modern America" was Whitman; and it is a sign of Brooks's modernity that he praised Whitman in terms starkly opposed to that of the poet's contemporaries. Where Lowell found Whitman's poetry marred by eccentricities of personality, Brooks celebrated it for embodying "that deep, shaking impact of personality for which one turns to the abiding poets and writers of the world."

WITH LEWIS MUMFORD'S *The Golden Day*, which appeared in 1926, the American Renaissance that Matthiessen codified fifteen years later was born, with Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, and Whitman taking center stage. Mumford's paean to Whitman inverted all the values that Norton and Lowell held dear: "One could not become a sympathetic reader of Whitman without re-forming oneself into an approximation of this new shape. Only commonplace works of art reflect the everyday personality of the reader; the supreme works always show or hint of the new shape the reader may become: they are prophetic, formative." And Mumford made this point by disparaging Longfellow: "One might remove Longfellow without changing a single possibility of American life; had Whitman died in the cradle, however, the possibilities of American life would have been definitely impoverished. He created a new pattern of experience and character."

Whitman was so attractive to moderns such as Mumford because he represented the promise of a literature at once American, democratic, progressive, and vital. The irony, and it is not a small one, is that Whitman saw Longfellow not as contributing to the ills of his time, but as an antidote to those ills. Like everyone else, he loved Longfellow. Shortly after his death, Whitman proclaimed:

> He is certainly the sort of bard and counteractant most needed for our materialistic, self-assertive, money-worshipping, Anglo-Saxon races, and especially for the present age in America,—an age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician, and the day workman; for whom and among whom he comes as the poet of melody, courtesy, deference,—poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy, Germany, Spain, and in Northern Europe, poet of all sympathetic gentleness, and universal poet of women and young people. I should have to think long if I were asked to name the man who had done more, and in more valuable directions, for America.

And Longfellow on Whitman? One suspects that he would have shared Lowell's distaste for Whitman's poetry, but he was courteous to Whitman the man. In 1876, on a visit to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Longfellow permitted his host, George Childs, to arrange a visit to Camden, and four years later, during his last trip to Boston, Whitman called on Longfellow in Cambridge. Whitman later said he would not soon forget "his lit-up face and glowing warmth and courtesy, in the modes of what is called the old school."

REGARDLESS OF HOW Longfellow was seen by even an outsider such as Whitman, the bard's image was fatefully cast in the early twentieth century. V. L. Parrington put the case against him in *Main Currents in American Thought* in 1927: "One could scarcely have lived more detached from contemporary America, more effectively insulated against the electric currents of the time." Longfellow's quietism was hopelessly out of step with a new generation of readers who judged literature by how well it matched their own preoccupations, which were largely political. But that was not all. The stunning achievements of the modernists had also made Longfellow's aesthetic obsolete. Whitman and Dickinson could be seen as precursors to modernism, but not Longfellow. What could be said for a poet who was not exercised by irony, tension, and paradox, whose utterance was distinguished by unaffected simplicity and clarity?

And so no body of Longfellow criticism ever developed, and he lives a shadowy existence in anthologies, when he is included at all. As for anthologies of American verse, no one has yet left him out, but over the years his place has been diminished, as fewer and fewer of his poems are included. Only fragments of the long narrative poems appear, and most often he is represented by a few short lyrics and sonnets amenable to modern taste. This very partial selection has the effect of distorting the historical record: it presents a new, modern Longfellow, a writer who would be unrecognizable to his contemporaries.

Of course, if it is a matter of including only the greatest works of poetry in such books—if it is a matter of aesthetic judgment—then the anthologists are certainly doing the best they can. Longfellow's achievement is estimable, but it cannot be counted among the first rank. Perhaps a better home for his most popular poems would be in so-called "documents of American history" books, which would at least recognize his historical importance, even if it would nullify his artistic accomplishment. Still, anyone who takes the time to read McClatchy's generous new edition of Longfellow—anyone who experiences firsthand its marvelous versatility and its haunting melodies—will regret the prospect of Longfellow being treated merely as a historical figure, as a "schoolroom poet" or a dead white male.

ABOVE ALL ELSE, Longfellow was a cosmopolitan, and as a translator he absorbed the music and the spirit of other places and times. Perhaps his greatest achievement is his translation of *The Divine Comedy*. To each of the three books he affixed two of his own sonnets. In his first sonnet honoring the *Inferno*, we can still hear the "poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy" whom Whitman held so dear:

> Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
> A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
> Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
> Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
> Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
> Far off the noises of the world retreat;
> The loud vociferations of the street
> Become an undistinguishable roar.
> So, as I enter here from day to day,
> And leave my burden at this minster gate,
> Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
> The tumult of the time disconsolate
> To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
> While the eternal ages watch and wait.

Longfellow translated Dante while grieving for his wife, who died when her dress accidentally caught on fire. Longfellow had tried to save her, and was utterly devastated, and in his darkest hours returned to life through Dante. With this beautiful sonnet, which is at once a tribute to Dante, to poetry, to prayer, and to his wife's memory, Longfellow reminds us that the great poetry of the past was great not least because it transcended the confines of subjectivity and turned personal, unbearable, and ineffable experiences into a public expression of humility. Given the boisterously confessional nature of much of contemporary poetry, we would be well challenged to try to recalibrate our sensibility by Longfellow's modest grandeur. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Innocent Mistake

A FRIEND OF MINE, PASSing by a sidewalk café on the Upper East Side not long ago, suddenly heard a small child in a stroller parked by a table screaming, "Latte! Latte!" As my friend crept nearer, her curiosity became astonishment, and then horror. "That family," she insisted to me later, still wild-eyed, "was not Italian."

IF MY FRIEND HAD TOLD ME THE scene took place in a movie, I would have believed it. Children may or may not be getting more and more like adults, as the common perception, or complaint, would have it. But recently, on the big screen and on the small screen, they have aged about 30 years.

IF YOU WANT TO SEE HOW FAR ARTISTIC portrayals of children have come—or gone—take a look at J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, whose fiftieth anniversary falls this year. On the surface, Holden Caulfield is boundlessly cynical; he calls just about everything and everyone in the adult world "phony." Yet after Holden has seen through adulthood's pretense and sham, he suffers a breakdown, ending up in what amounts to an insane asylum. The young boy's cynicism was all along a symptom of his innocence and vulnerability.

THE POPULAR ART PRODUCED AROUND the same time shares the book's picture of childhood. The bad boys played by James Dean and Sal Mineo in *Rebel Without a Cause* are embodiments of innocence run wild, and they end up as lost as Holden. Even the adorable Beaver and the mildly delinquent Eddie Haskell in "Leave It to Beaver" never get their own way with the adult world. In all three cases—the child as innocent misfit; the child as innocent miscreant; the child as, well, innocent child—grown-ups have the last word.

FIFTY YEARS LATER, THE WAY WE imagine the relationship between kids and adults has been turned on its head. Children hold sway in film and on television. They are like Holden's revenge: Strong and invincible, earnest and sincere, they do not need to protect themselves with cynical wisecracks. Screen adults, on the other hand, have acquired Holden's wounded ennui and, like him, lack authority to the point of innocence and vulnerability.

CONSIDER A PILE OF RECENT EVIdence. In one of last year's film sensations, *The Sixth Sense*, a wise super-child saves the day; in another, *American Beauty*, morally superior children make a victorious escape from a world dominated by destructive and puerile adults. In the more recent *Girlfight*, a teenage girl who is a budding prizefighter wallops her cynical father, though he had never obstructed her path anyway. Likewise for *Pay It Forward*, in which a solid and mature little boy saves the lives of his mother and his junior high school teacher, two disillusioned and emotionally shattered adults. In the charming *Almost Famous*, William, an ambitious teenage journalist, tolerates, lovingly, his mother's comically sardonic view of teenage culture, just as he eventually shocks the mostly nihilistic rock band he is covering into self-awareness. William triumphs over the adult world. By the time Steven Spielberg's next film, *Artificial Intelligence*—about a child genius who saves Western civilization, or something like that—comes out, the trend will have reached its crescendo on the silver screen.

THE SAME GOES FOR TELEVISION. In the series "Malcolm in the Middle," the knowing young Malcolm makes the surrounding adults look like textbook examples of infantile regression. And in another TV series, "Dawson's Creek," about a group of adolescents so narcissistically involuted it's a marvel they can make their way across a busy street, adults barely exist. When they do, it's only to get pushed around by the teens: "Isn't there a knitting needle waiting for you somewhere?" says one girl as she sweetly dismisses her—yes, cynical—grandmother from the room.

NATURALLY, FILM'S REPRESENTATION of children has a lot to do with the logic of the market. Because children and "young adults" love movies, movies project back to them a child's fantasies of untrammeled freedom and power. But something else is going on, too. Having created children as adultlike consumers, popular culture has turned children into morally legitimate objects of desire. It is a different kind of transformation than what seems to occur when jeans companies dress up little girls like Lolita in tight denim and slight halter tops. A child in revealing clothing is still a child in revealing clothing. The imposition of adult sexuality accentuates the aura of juvenile innocence, and so the old prohibition that protects children from adults still has an argument. But in so many current films and TV programs, children are not superficially sexualized; they are profoundly, so to speak, maturized. What argument can there be against inviting a 14-year-old, who is so grown-up that he or she solves adult problems, out for an evening at Nobu?

YET THERE IS A WRINKLE HERE. IF the adults in these movies are driven by infantile desires for immediate gratification, the new cinematic children are like little Buddhas, free from all appetites except the desire to do good in the world. The young couple in *American Beauty* film each other while naked without seeming to want each other physically. All they wish for is to live truthfully and empathetically. In that sense, these screen children—scripted for consumption the world over—are reproaches to the consumerist ethos. So accelerated are the phases of American culture that the inner child has now sprung into public as the outer role model. Our most popular cultural commodity is the image of anti-commodifying purity. They have us coming and going.

ONE LAST EXTRAPOLATION. FILM'S and television's images of adults as increasingly childish perhaps hint at a new collective anxiety: that adults won't be able to restrain their appetites when they are among children. For the truth is, of course, that adults still rule. And so there is finally an irony to pop culture depictions of children. Far from being malevolent or laughable phonies, the screen parents of these screen children are helpless fragments of an accommodating reality. But in real life, the often harsh adult world—not abusive, just indifferent—doesn't yield so readily to a child's will. No wonder fatal shootings like those at Columbine happen more and more often. The contrast between screenality and actuality is enough to snap a fragile ego. So all the luxurious political posturing about Hollywood's more revoltingly violent products is half off the mark. The fact is that movies with dominant children and submissive grown-ups suppress the collision of wills between children and adults. Such films are not (meaningfully) violent enough. They diminish the ordeal of innocence, and they give cynicism a good name. Holden would have known what to call that.

LEE SIEGEL

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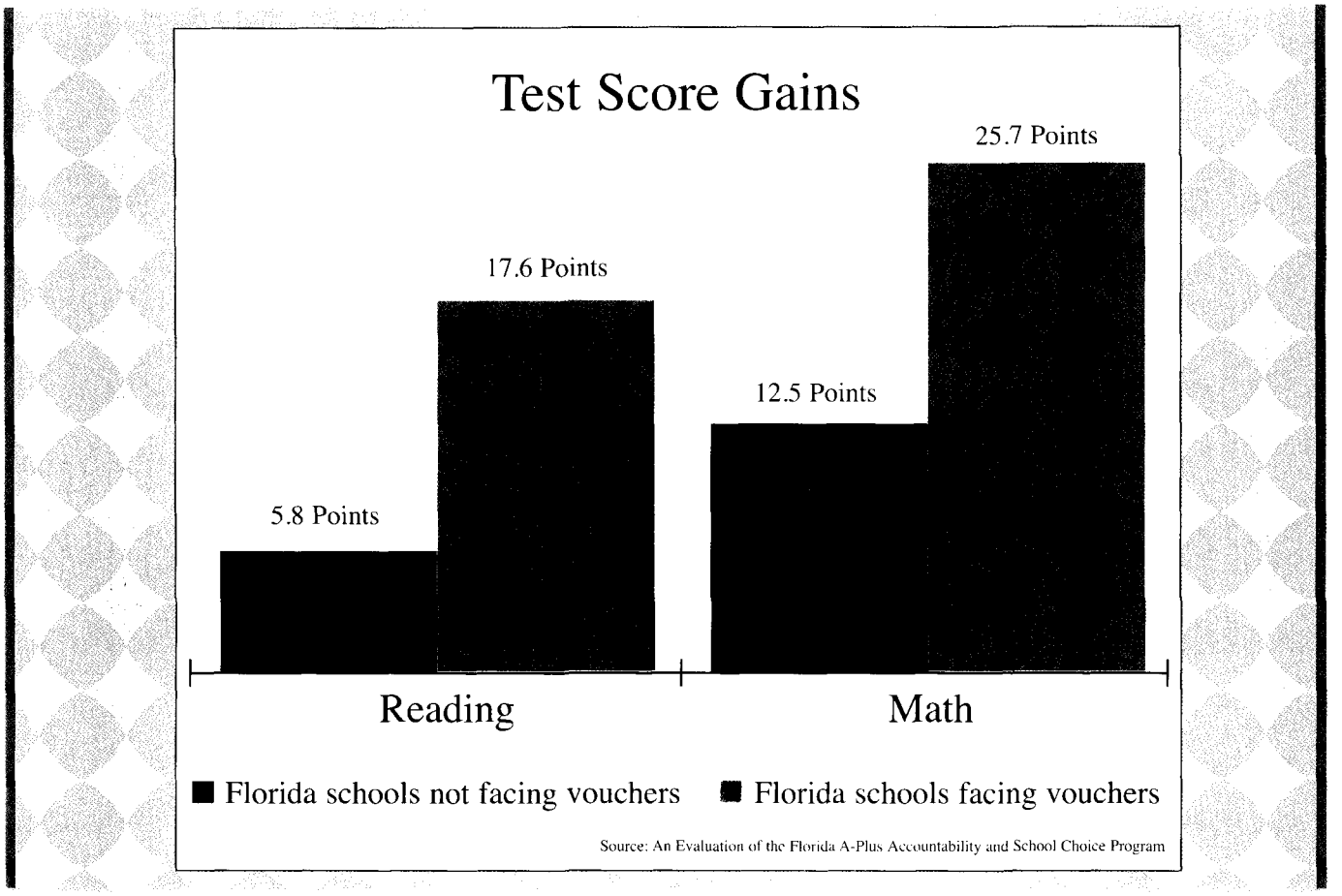

More Evidence: School Choice HELPS Public Schools

On February 15, Florida State University, Harvard University, and The Manhattan Institute released an official state evaluation of Florida's A+ school hoice scholarship program.

USA Today described the report as the "most comprehensive non-partisan study to date..." The newspaper said it "shows that schools facing vouchers posted larger improvements on standardized test scores than schools that did not face that threat."

The report itself said:

"The Florida A-Plus Program is a school accountability system with teeth.

"Schools [with] two failing grades from the state during a four-year period have vouchers offered to their students ...[T]hose students can choose ...a different public or private school. The theory ...is that schools in danger of failing will improve their academic performance to avoid...having their students depart with tuition vouchers...

"This report examines whether schools that faced the prospect of having vouchers offered to their students experienced larger improvements in [academic achievement] than other schools.

"The results show that schools ...whose students would have been offered tuition vouchers if they failed ...achieved test score gains more than twice as large as those achieved by other schools...[S]chools with failing grades that faced the prospect of vouchers exhibited especially large gains...

"This report shows that the performance of students on academic tests improves when public schools are faced with the prospect that their students will receive vouchers..."

Parental school choice is widespread — unless you're poor.

The chart above compares test score gains by schools faced with vouchers and other schools not facing the prospect of vouchers. Similar comparative gains occurred in writing tests.

Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., authored the new A+ evaluation, available at www.manhattan-institute.org. Dr. Greene is a senior fellow at The Manhattan Institute and a research associate at Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance. Dr. Greene is a widely-respected education policy analyst whose work has been published by The Brookings Institution and other leading institutions.

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For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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"NOT SINCE 'THE GODFATHER' HAS HOLLYWOOD TURNED OUT AN EPIC AS POWERFUL AS 'TRAFFIC.'"

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Michael Wilmington, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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Edward Guthmann, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

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Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

"★★★★ ELECTRIFYING!"
Steven Rea, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

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Philip Wuntch, THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

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